MAXXXINE

Written by

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1 INT. TEXAS TENT REVIVAL - DAY 1

The flicker of celluloid morphs into black and white 8MM HOME MOVIE FOOTAGE of a SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL dancing on a wooden stage flanked by crosses. A banner above reads: **JESUS SAVES**

Little MAXINE MILLER (7) glides across the platform. Her father's VOICE encourages her from behind the lens.

ERNEST MILLER
That's my little girl. There's nobody else like you. You're gonna be the star of the church one day!

LITTLE MAXINE
Do you really think so?

ERNEST MILLER
If that's what you want.

She finishes her dance.

LITTLE MAXINE
I wanna be just like you, Daddy.

ERNEST MILLER
Then you have to work hard.

LITTLE MAXINE
I will. I'll do whatever it takes.

ERNEST MILLER
What do we always say?

LITTLE MAXINE
(winded)
I will not accept--

ERNEST MILLER
Take your time. Preach it like you mean it or it won't come true.

She catches her breath and stands up straight.

LITTLE MAXINE
I will not accept a life I do not deserve!

ERNEST MILLER
That's right, Maxine. Very good.

She smiles at the camera as the film flickers and rolls out.

CUT TO BLACK:

"IN THIS BUSINESS, UNTIL YOU'RE KNOWN AS A MONSTER, YOU'RE NOT A STAR." - BETTE DAVIS

FADE IN:

2 INT. SOUND STAGE - MORNING 2

THE GARGANTUAN STUDIO SOUND STAGE DOOR IS ROLLED OPEN--

Morning light spills into the cavernous space, silhouetting a mysterious WOMAN. *Made to look miniature by the vast scope of her surroundings.*

A lone chair in the center of the studio waits for her.

She enters the stage, high heels rhythmically clicking against the cement. *It is a long trek to her destination.*

An uptight CASTING DIRECTOR (60s), lecherous PRODUCER (60s), and their stylish, cutting-edge DIRECTOR (50s) all sit at a table across from the chair.

AS THE WOMAN GETS CLOSER, HER IDENTITY IS FINALLY REVEALED--

MAXINE MINX struts in style, scantily clad in a denim crop top. She now sports bleach-blonde hair and dark, smokey grey eyeshadow. *New era, new look.*

CASTING DIRECTOR
Good morning.

Maxine smiles and sits down.

The former actress-turned-casting-director peers through her horn-rimmed glasses at Maxine's HEADSHOT.

The glamour photo is windswept and sultry. Unlike a traditional actor's headshot, she is wearing nothing but french lingerie.

CASTING DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
(judgmental)
So, Maxine, your agent tells us you are quite a popular name in...*adult* film and entertainment, is that correct?

MAXINE
(unbothered)
Yes, Ma'am.

The Casting Director removes her glasses and raises an eyebrow.

CASTING DIRECTOR
I'm curious. Did you always want to be in that line of work?

Maxine thinks for a moment--

MAXINE
I always wanted to be famous.
(beat)
I can't sing or write country music, and where I come from there's only three ways to get to the top.

The turtleneck-clad producer leans forward, tickled at his opportunity to talk to a real-life porn star.

PRODUCER
If you don't mind me asking...do you enjoy it? *Pornography?*

MAXINE
I'm blessed with the talents that I have. People like to look at my body, and I make a good living.

PRODUCER
So then why come and do this?

MAXINE
Well, truth be told, I've always had a larger vision for myself. Realistically, porn can only take me so far. I'm gonna be thirty-three years old pretty soon, and in hardcore women age like bread, not wine. I haven't got to where I wanna be yet. I want the *good life*. I figure acting is acting. I can do just as good of a job as any of those other blondes out there. All I need is a fair shake.

The Director finally chimes in with her posh British accent. *She has not quite fallen for Maxine's charm.*

DIRECTOR
(concerned)
Is that your real accent?

MAXINE
Yes, Ma'am.
(beat)
Oklahoma. Born and bred.

Maxine shares a look with the Director. The casting director butts back in--

CASTING DIRECTOR
(impatient)
Let's give it a try then, shall we?

Maxine nods.

A twenty-something CASTING ASSISTANT sneaks out from behind a VHS CAMCORDER. He steps in front of her and holds up a SLATE that reads **MAXINE MINX, THE PURITAN II.**

CASTING DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
(condescending)
If you need to read off the sides
we gave you just go ahead, alright?

MAXINE
(confident)
I know the lines.

Maxine puts down the paper she's been holding with her lines on them. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

When her eyes reopen, she is *locked in*. Maxine's southern accent vanishes as she transforms into the role of **VERONICA RUTLAND.**

VERONICA
It may sound hard to believe but
it's true. Evil never really dies.
I've seen it. Stalking me like a
specter from the past. Haunting my
dreams. My nightmares.

Her eyes well with tears.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
I can feel it inside of me.
Transforming into something
vengeful. Something malevolent.
Forcing me to do terrible, awful,
murderous things.
(beat)
(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Whatever horrors happened here, so many years ago. They're not over. The Devil has come back...to make me pay for my greatest sin.
(beat)
The sin of living.

After a long pause--

DIRECTOR
Nicely done.

Maxine wipes her tears and gathers herself.

MAXINE
Thank you.

CASTING DIRECTOR
(beat)
Do you mind taking your top off so we can see your breasts?

MAXINE
(unbothered)
Yeah, sure.

She unzips her top and shows the room her bare chest.

PRE-LAP: ADDICTED TO LOVE by **ROBERT PALMER--**

3 EXT. SOUND STAGE - MORNING 3

ROBERT PALMER BLASTS as Maxine walks out of the sound stage, proud of the job she did. *She worked hard on that monologue.*

She passes a long line of classier Hollywood BLONDE onlookers waiting to audition. Maxine makes eye contact with every one of them.

MAXINE
(intimidating)
Y'all might as well go home because I fucking nailed that.

She puts on her SUNGLASSES and struts past a sign that reads: ***OPEN CASTING TODAY - SHOW US YOUR X FACTOR!***

4 EXT. STUDIO PARKING LOT - MORNING 4

Maxine gets in her white 1982 MERCEDES-BENZ CONVERTIBLE. The personalized license plate reads **MAXXXINE.**

5 EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - MORNING 5

Oncoming cars blare their horns and swerve as Maxine peels out onto the street. She speeds past a small group of PROTESTORS picketing outside the studio gates with SIGNS warning about the dangers of **SEX AND VIOLENCE IN MOVIES.**

6 EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY 6

SUBTITLE: **1985.**

Beautiful, sunny Los Angeles. *A land of endless opportunity.*

The Mercedes glides through the canyons, weaving in and out of traffic. *Living her best life,* Maxine puffs on a cigarette while her hair blows in the wind.

Just beyond the affluent hills of HOLLYWOOD lies her destination: *The San Fernando Valley.*

THE IMAGES OF MAXINE DRIVING WARBLE AND DEGRADE AS IF THE RECEPTION ON AN ANTENNA TELEVISION WERE BEING INTERRUPTED--

MAXINE'S DRIVE SERVES AS THE TITLE SEQUENCE:

THE TV CHANNEL CHANGES *- INTERCUTTING HER DRIVING WITH POPULAR COMMERCIALS AND TOPICAL POP CULTURE OF THE DAY--*

FROM TIPPER GORE'S PMRC "**FILTHY FIFTEEN**" TO THE "COALITION ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE" TO PHIL DONAHUE INTERVIEWING SATANISTS TO THE LAPD'S ONGOING HUNT FOR THE "**NIGHT STALKER**" MURDERER.

7 EXT. THE LANDING STRIP - DAY 7

The glamorous sheen of Hollywood is exchanged for the working-class dullness of Van Nuys. Maxine pulls into the parking lot of THE LANDING STRIP. A JET AIRLINER flies low overhead.

The dingy strip club sits across from the VAN NUYS AIRPORT. A large sign advertises SUNDAY BRUNCH.

8 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - DAY 8

Maxine walks into the main room. A handful of SURLY DAY WORKERS sit slumped at the bar eating hot wings while a PAST HER PRIME STRIPPER half-heartedly dances on the stage in a leopard bikini.

9 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - KITCHEN - DAY 9

Maxine pushes through a door into the kitchen as a few MEXICAN COOKS prepare more wings and top-round steaks.

10 EXT. THE LANDING STRIP - BREEZEWAY - DAY 10

On the other side of the kitchen is a loading dock breezeway leading to a warehouse. Maxine heads inside--

11 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - PORN STUDIO - DAY 11

The warehouse has been converted into a makeshift porn studio. *The lesser imitation of where she just auditioned.*

A SPORTY SEX SCENE TAKES PLACE ON A SMALL LOCKER ROOM SET.

A gorgeous young woman wearing two strips of eyeblack lies across a bench while a steroid-fueled bodybuilder in a jockstrap and baseball helmet thrusts into her.

AMBER JAMES (20s), is the seasoned professional, while **FRANKIE LOVE**(30s), struggles to keep up with her sexual prowess.

The hardcore action is being filmed by a crew of two USC STUDENTS. *One operating a camera, the other on sound.*

SHEPARD TUREI (40s), the bearded, cocaine-fueled producer, grips a BASEBALL BAT tightly. He looks more like a motorcycle gang leader than a film producer and is stressed that they are running behind.

Amber, legs akimbo, looks over at Maxine and waves.

AMBER
(mid-coitus)
Hey Maxi!

Maxine throws her a casual wave but keeps moving. Annoyed, Shepard reprimands Amber in his thick KIWI ACCENT.

SHEPARD
Stay focused, Amber, we're almost done.

AMBER
You said that three positions ago.

SHEPARD
(to Maxine)
As soon as Frankie Love here decides he can bust we'll be ready for you.

FRANKIE
(to Shep)
I'm trying, man.

Maxine heads into the dressing room.

12 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - DRESSING ROOM - DAY 12

She walks into the cluttered storage space. It's lined with mannequins, sex toys, and boxes of VHS tapes. Various electronic equipment and PORN MOVIE POSTERS abound.

Many of them are titled **MAXXXINE.** *In 5 short years, she has made quite a name for herself in this industry.*

ROBERT PALMER FINALLY DISSIPATES--

Maxine makes her way to a clothes rack in front of a wall of glass bricks. She grabs a NURSE COSTUME off of the hanger and slips out of her clothes and into the skin-tight outfit.

She plunks down in front of the mirror. Tosses her hair the way she likes it and begins to touch up her makeup. She locks eyes with herself and leans in close to her reflection.

Just as she is about to say something, the door swings open and Amber appears, now in a bathrobe.

AMBER
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. That meathead had absolutely no cock control. I was supposed to be in Toluca Lake an hour ago. Where does Shep find these amateurs?

She sits down next to Maxine. She wipes off the eyeblack, plucks out her fake lashes, and returns them to a jar.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Wanna hit a party in the hills tonight? Gonna be loads of rich guys.

Maxine continues finessing her makeup.

MAXINE
Can't. I'm at Show World.

AMBER
Buzzkill. All you ever do is work.

Amber gets up, drops her robe, and slides into a romper.

MAXINE
Gotta make hay while the sun shines.

AMBER
I'm not country like you. I'll find the best plastic surgeon on Rodeo Drive to tighten up my hay.

MAXINE
Won't be cheap.

AMBER
It will be when the surgeon's my husband. Ta ta!

She gives Maxine a wink and wanders out. Maxine turns back to the mirror and eyes a MOTHER GOOSE COOKIE JAR on the table. She lifts the lid. *It is **FULL of COCAINE.***

Maxine dips her press-on pinky nail inside, scoops out a bit of powder, and takes a big ***SNIFF!!!***

CUT TO:

13 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - DUSK 13

Maxine's apartment is a three-story art deco structure from Hollywood's golden age. Silent film stars CHARLIE CHAPLIN, MARY PICKFORD & FRANCIS BUSHMAN peer down from a faded mural decorating the side of the building.

On the ground floor is an ADULT VIDEO STORE and PIZZA PARLOR. A large SIGN attached to the corner of the building spells out PIZZA in red neon. Maxine swings an illegal U-turn to park her car in front of the building.

A LURKING **VHS *POV*** *FILMS Maxine on a* ***CAMCORDER*** *from a CADILLAC COUP DEVILLE across the street.*

JOHN LABAT
(V.O.)
Smile. You're on Candid Camera.

JOHN LABAT (50s), lowers the camera. He is a heavy-set man, with a gold tooth, puffing on a cigarette while sweating his way through a suit and suspenders.

PRE-LAP PHONE RINGING--

14 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - DUSK 14

Maxine fumbles with her keys and grabs the phone.

MAXINE
Yeah?

A woman with a thick Brooklyn accent whines back.

AGENT'S ASSISTANT
(on phone)
I have your amazing agent, Teddy Night, for you.

MAXINE
Okay.

AGENT'S ASSISTANT
(beat)
One moment.

Maxine drags the extra-long phone cord down the hall.

15 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DUSK 15

Her bedroom is a colorful bomb blast of trendy 80's fashion. She stretches the cord inside the room and digs through a pile of clothes scattered around the floor.

TEDDY NIGHT ESQ. (60s), Maxine's agent and lawyer - A New York ex-pat with a sordid past - gets on the line.

TEDDY
Maxi! How you doing, doll babe?

MAXINE
Running late. Looking for my outfit for tonight.

TEDDY
You want the good news or the bad news?

She finds a skirt she likes and tosses it on the bed along with some fishnets and lingerie.

MAXINE
Bad.

TEDDY
You didn't get the Lizzy Borden music video. They loved your look but said you weren't a big enough name outside of porn.

She digs in the closet for some shoes to go with that skirt.

MAXINE
How am I supposed to build mainstream appeal when nobody ever gives me a chance?

TEDDY
I know, I know. It's a catch-22.

Maxine chucks a pair of high heels onto the bed.

MAXINE
It's prejudice is what it is.

She opens a cigar box in the closet. Inside is a .22 PISTOL.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
I fucked on film and now Hollywood wants me to wear a Scarlet X for the rest of my life. I deserve a clean slate.

TEDDY
You're preaching to the converted, sweetheart. But what do I always say?

MAXINE & TEDDY
(in sarcastic unison)
"Everyone loves an underdog."

TEDDY
That's exactly right. Now, do you want the good news?

She sighs and tosses her GUN on the bed.

MAXINE
What is it?

16 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 16

A seedy, dark, and dingy place with the glow of neon coming through the front window. **BLOODFEAST** by **THE MISFITS** rumbles out of a boombox by the cash register.

Maxine walks in, passing a couple of MEN IN TRENCH COATS on her way to find the clerk.

LEON GREEN (20s), African American, wears a sleeveless Judas Priest T-shirt and a dangling upside-down cross earring in his right ear. He is busy re-shelving some VHS tapes, fumbling them into place thanks to the cast on his left hand.

MAXINE
Name five celebrities who got their start in horror movies.

He responds as if the answers are obvious.

LEON
Jamie Lee Curtis, John Travolta, Demi Moore, Brooke Shields, and...

MAXINE
Maxine fucking Minx.

Leon stops replenishing the shelves and looks at her.

LEON
No shit?

MAXINE
Puritan 2. I got it.

He pushes his taped-together coke-bottle glasses up his face.

LEON
You’re actually gonna be in a movie I’ll watch for once.

She leans next to one of the trench coat men.

MAXINE
(to trench coat)
All the doubters can suck my dick.

The trench coat man uncomfortably walks away. Leon picks up a stack of movies and walks to the other side of the shelf.

LEON
The Puritan is a future classic, as far as ultra-violent Satanic possession movies go. Not exactly Terms of Endearment, but in thirty years we’ll see which one has more fans. Elizabeth Bender is a very underrated director.

MAXINE
My agent thinks it could make me a crossover star.

LEON
Like Marilyn Chambers.

MAXINE
She's not a star. Brooke Shields is a star.

LEON
Brooke Shields didn't do porn.

MAXINE
So? She still got naked and now she's in a fucking Muppet movie.

LEON
(beat)
That's true.

Maxine picks up THE PURITAN VHS TAPE with a beautiful starlet on the cover. She admires it before showing it to Leon.

MAXINE
This is gonna be me soon, Leon. Just you watch.

LEON
I'll organize pizza and champagne for America's newest scream queen.

She puts down the tape and turns to the door.

MAXINE
That's why I like you.

LEON
(to himself)
...You like me because I'm the only guy who isn't trying to fuck you.

She disappears outside as he looks for where the movie in his hand goes, mumbling the title to himself.

LEON (CONT'D)
Ass Sandwich...

PRE-LAP: *OBSESSION* *by* *ANIMOTION*

17 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD - NIGHT 17

THE NE'ER-DO-WELLS ARE OUT IN FULL FORCE ON HOLLYWOOD BLVD.

Pimps, hookers, cops, drag queens, homeless, junkies, nuns, punk rockers, Hare Krishna, breakdancers, and celebrity impersonators trawl the street beneath the flashing lights of sex shops and peep shows.

THE CURRENT MECCA OF THE STRIP IS HOLLYWOOD SHOW WORLD--

18 INT. HOLLYWOOD SHOW WORLD - NIGHT 18

Up a steep stairwell and down a long neon-lit hallway, several small booths branch off in each direction. At the end of the hall is a large decorative EVIL EYE.

Inside the peep booths, GORGEOUS WOMEN DANCE WHILE *UNATTRACTIVE MEN MASTURBATE.*

19 INT. PEEP BOOTH - NIGHT 19

A mysterious BLACK-GLOVED customer drops a quarter in the machine. A metal gate groans open, revealing Maxine in a neon-lit, wallpapered room with velvet paintings.

ANIMOTION CONTINUES--

And Maxine, in a black wig, dances in the peep booth. Her body whips around, ripping off layers of clothes after every spin. Stripping down to fishnets and lingerie.

THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE WATCHES HER FROM THE BOOTH--

She spins around and drops to the floor. Puts her legs up on the one-way mirror glass - Spread for the mysterious observer to see between.

MAXINE
Do you like what you see? Am I everything you dreamed?

Her appeal is intoxicating. *She really is a star.*

REACTING TO HER PERFORMANCE - THE GLOVED HANDS TENSE AND SQUEEZE UNTIL THE VINYL LINING SUDDENLY TEARS AWAY FROM THE WALL--

CUT TO:

20 INT. HOLLYWOOD SHOW WORLD - LATER THAT NIGHT 20

Maxine stands at the top of the stairs reading AN ACTOR PREPARES by STANISLAVSKY.

She lights a cigarette as **TABBY MARTIN** (20s), another Show World dancer with a tremendously teased wig walks up in a FUR COAT. Maxine stuffs the book in her duffel bag as they walk downstairs. Tabby removes the wig revealing her short hair.

TABBY
Thanks for waiting. I don't like walking out of here alone while that freakin 'night stalker' guy is on the loose. He attacked again in Arcadia. Before that it was Burbank. Did you hear about it on the news? They're saying it's devil worship. Way too close for comfort if you ask me...
(beat)
Although I guess nobody would have ever heard of Elizabeth Short if it wasn't for the Black Dahlia.

21 EXT. HOLLYWOOD SHOW WORLD - NIGHT 21

WALKING IN LA by **MISSING PERSONS** plays as the girls walk out onto Hollywood Blvd, weaving in and out of pedestrian traffic, unfazed by the sleazy urban circus.

TABBY
I know a killer after-hours spot in the hills if you're interested.

MAXINE
I gotta get up early.

TABBY
(pouting)
I hate going to parties by myself. Let me get a hot dog real quick so nobody sees me eat.

They make their way to a vendor on the corner.

TABBY (CONT'D)
How come you're getting up early?

MAXINE
I have a fitting for a film.

TABBY
Oh, yeah? Guy-girl or girl-girl?

MAXINE
A real movie.

TABBY
No kidding? I didn't know you could act.

MAXINE
I can.

Tabby sighs.

TABBY
I'm just dying for some good news of my own.

Maxine empathetically smiles as the VENDOR sprays a glob of RED KETCHUP on a hot dog. Tabby hands them a dollar and grabs her meal. She notices John Labat filming them with a camcorder across the street.

TABBY (CONT'D)
(to Maxine)
Oh, would you look at this? Fucking tourists--

ON THE VHS CAMCORDER POV--

TABBY (CONT'D)
Hey! If you wanna see us, pal, buy a ticket! The view ain't free!

Tabby and Maxine stick up their middle fingers and **THE VHS POV PANS AWAY.** Tabby returns her attention to Maxine as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened--

TABBY (CONT'D)
I have a friend who is in straight pictures. Pays for shit compared to fuck flicks.

MAXINE
Not if you're at the top.

TABBY
What kind of picture is it?

MAXINE
Horror.

Tabby takes a bite out of her hot dog.

TABBY
(with her mouth full)
Honey, you ain't going to the top in no horror movie.

22 INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT 22

Tabby loudly stuffs herself into the back of a checkered taxi. The SIKH DRIVER is not thrilled about having her.

TABBY
Sure you don't wanna tag along? The house is totally fabulous. It's right under the Hollywood sign. I hear you have to take a gondola to get there. Real cosmopolitan shit.

That perks her attention, but Maxine shakes her head no.

TABBY (CONT'D)
Your loss. Be careful walking home.

MAXINE
I can handle myself.

TABBY
Yeah, so said every dead girl in Hollywood...

She shuts the car door. Maxine watches the taxi drive away. She takes the last drag of her cigarette and drops it, stomping it out on **THEDA BARA'S HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME STAR.**

PRE LAP: SOMEBODY'S WATCHING ME by **ROCKWELL--**

23 EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT 23

THE MUSIC IS ORIGINATING FROM A BREAKDANCER'S BOOMBOX--

Maxine's high heels click along the Walk of Fame. She keeps her head down, passing familiar hookers, pimps, and homeless along the way.

THE MYSTERIOUS VHS-FILMED POV IS NOW FOLLOWING HER. *WEAVING THROUGH THE CROWD, UNNOTICED.*

She passes a PSYCHIC PALM READER advertising "REAL PREDICTIONS". The PSYCHIC (70s), a Romani woman, sits out front of her store in a beach chair. She waves at Maxine.

PSYCHIC
How about you, pretty lady? Care to know about your future?

Maxine stops and considers.

24 INT. PSYCHIC PARLOR - NIGHT 24

The Psychic fires up the CRYSTAL BALL on her SCRYING TABLE.

PSYCHIC
Now, what is it that you wish to learn?

MAXINE
Am I gonna be famous?

The psychic scans the lights within the crystal ball.

PSYCHIC
Oh, yes. The whole world will know your name.
(beat)
But not for why you think.

MAXINE
What do you mean?

The psychic stares deep into her glowing orb.

PSYCHIC
You must go beyond the green door. Only there will you find what you're truly looking for.

MAXINE
I don't get it. What are you talking about? What door?

The psychic struggles to see more.

PSYCHIC
The crystal cannot show me details so personal. Whatever you're hiding...It's locked away deep inside.

Maxine sits back, nervous.

PSYCHIC (CONT'D)
But trust in the premonition. When the time is right, you'll know what to do. You always have...

As Maxine tries to process the psychic's comments, she is suddenly startled by the loud BUZZ of a doorbell.

PSYCHIC (CONT'D)
Ah! There's my noodles.

25 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD - NIGHT 25

Maxine passes the CHINESE DELIVERY BOY at the door and walks back out onto the street. The **VHS POV** is still documenting her every move--

She passes a KARATE DOJO with a line of students practicing self-defense, then a MILITARY SURPLUS STORE with a RAMBO standee advertising the dangers of the SOVIET UNION.

An ELECTRONIC STORE with multiple TV/VCRs in the window blasts NEWS REPORTS ABOUT THE NIGHT STALKER on all its screens.

NEWS ANCHOR
(on tv)
Authorities still have no leads to the identity of the satanic serial killer terrorizing Los Angeles.

Maxine turns down a dark alley, *a shortcut to her apartment.*

26 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT 26

Maxine walks down the alley. Fountains of STEAM billow from the manholes. *She hears footsteps behind her--*

A BUSTER KEATON STREET PERFORMER IN A FLAT HAT appears.

He flips out a BUTTERFLY KNIFE.

Maxine starts to walk faster--

BUSTER WALKS FASTER TOO--

She starts to run. *It's difficult in her HIGH HEELS.*

She turns the corner and goes to slip through the chain link fence outside her apartment but it doesn't budge.

She looks down at a chain and padlock holding the fence shut. Maxine looks back up at the razor wire covering the fence's top. *Her shortcut is now an unexpected DEAD END.* She yells for Leon at the nearby video store but it's no use.

BUSTER
(O.S.)
You can run, and you can hide, but you'll never get away.

Buster rounds the corner and comes face-to-face with Maxine's .22 PISTOL. Shocked and frightened, he stops in his tracks.

MAXINE
Drop it. *Buster.*

He drops the butterfly knife. Maxine picks it up and puts it in her pocket, keeping the pistol trained on his head.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
What were you gonna do, huh?

BUSTER
Nothing. I was just playin' around.

MAXINE
Well, we're playin' now.
(beat)
Strip.

BUSTER
What?

MAXINE
Strip naked.

He hesitates. She cocks the gun.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Do it!

He quickly takes off his clothes and huddles pathetically. Maxine sticks the barrel in his mouth.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Suck.

He begins to perform fellatio on the pistol. Tears start to run down his cheeks. She pulls the gun out of his mouth.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
On the ground. Face down. Ass up.

He does as he's told.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Do you know what happened to the last person who tried to kill me?

She looks down at his shriveled scrotum sticking out below his ass crack.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
I crushed her fucking head.

She lifts her foot and SLAMS her high heel down into his scrotum. She twists the heel, tearing open his ball bag.

PRE-LAP: SCREAMS--

27 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT 27

THE SCREAMS ARE COMING FROM THE TELEVISION - *CLARA (20s), a blood-splattered, puritan FARM GIRL, is tied to a stake in the center of a surrealist 17th-century village.*

The TOWNSPEOPLE - all in WOODEN MASKS - light the base of the stake and Clara erupts in flames.

The image FREEZE-FRAMES ON CLARA'S BURNT, SCREAMING FACE, and the end title pops on the screen: ***THE PURITAN.***

Leon and Maxine lie on the couch asleep, surrounded by an empty pizza box and a half-drunk bottle of pink champagne.

The VHS tape automatically stops and rewinds itself. The tv screen turns to analog snow. A static BUZZ fills the room.

A KNOCK at the front door stirs Maxine awake. She glances around the empty room and lands back on Leon, who is snoring.

She gets up and walks to the door. She looks through the peephole, but no one is there. She opens the door.

28 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT 28

Maxine looks both ways down the empty hall and then at her feet. A PACKAGE lies on the floor. *She wasn't expecting one.* She picks it up. No return address. *Weird.*

She tears into it, revealing a VHS tape with a handwritten label: ***FOR MAXINE***

29 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 29

She puts the tape in the VCR--

ON THE SCREEN IS FOOTAGE OF HER AT POWDER KEG FARMS IN 1979.

For the first time, Maxine sees herself having sex with JACKSON in the old barn. She watches her former self hypnotically staring back into the lens. She pauses the tape.

HOW COULD SOMEONE HAVE GOTTEN IT?

She stares at the screen and notices PEARL, watching her and Jackson from outside the barn. *Fear washes over her.* Leon stirs awake behind her.

LEON
What's that?

Maxine self-consciously ejects the VHS. She abruptly gets up and rushes off to her room.

30 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 30

Maxine hurries inside and locks the door. The RED GLOW from the neon pizza sign spills in from outside the window. She rips through the package looking for more info. Nothing.

She cautiously peers out the window at the empty street below. Nobody to be found. Leon knocks on the door.

LEON
You good?

She turns around, shaking.

MAXINE
I'm fine.

LEON
Alright. I'm gonna head home.

Maxine hears him walk away. She cracks open her bedroom door and sees him holding his SKATEBOARD and about to leave.

MAXINE
Wait...

He turns back. He can tell something is wrong.

LEON
Are you sure you're ok?

She isn't ready to admit that she's not.

MAXINE
Do you think it's possible for people to change who they are?

LEON
What do you mean?

MAXINE
Can I really become a movie star?

He shrugs.

LEON
If anyone can you can.

He can tell that wasn't comforting.

LEON (CONT'D)
All I know is you're gonna be in a video cassette we sell in the store. To me, that means you've made it. It's not just plastic and magnetic tape. It's history. Nothing will change that.

Maxine nervously smiles and Leon lets himself out. She anxiously stares at the VHS and then hurries to the front door to lock the chain.

31 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 31

Leon exits the apartment building. He puts on headphones and presses play on his WALKMAN. The tinny sound of **BASTARD** by **MOTLEY CRUE** reverberates out of the speakers.

John Labat is parked in the Cadillac across the street, watching. The neon PIZZA sign turns off as Leon skateboards away. The Cadillac slowly follows.

32 INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT 32

John Labat turns to an **UNSEEN COMPANION** in the passenger seat. Labat speaks with a thick NEW ORLEANS ACCENT.

JOHN LABAT
Before I go any further. Money talks and bullshit walks. You asked me to find the girl so I did, but whatever shit you got planned next is more than we bargained for. Now, I don't need to know the details of your dirty work. Your business is your business. But if you still want my help out here...The price has gone up.

WHISPERED VOICE
(beat)
Drive.

33 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 33

Just as Leon makes it to the end of the block, he senses something and skids to a stop. He turns back and looks at the car. *Spotted, the Cadillac immediately speeds off into the night.*

LEON
(to himself)
Punk ass bitch...

He continues his skate home.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT 34

THE **VHS-FILMED POV** DRIFTS DOWN A LONG ORNATE HALLWAY--

35 INT. MANSION - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT 35

THE **VHS POV** MAKES ITS WAY INSIDE A BEDROOM. *All of the furniture is covered with white sheets as if no one lives there.*

The **VHS POV** passes by a MIRROR and in the reflection is a Mexican MAN (50s) in a WHITE ROBE with a noticeable CLEFT PALATE holding the camera.

The **VHS POV** pulls open the slatted closet doors - REVEALING TABBY AND AMBER, HUDDLED TOGETHER ON THE FLOOR. BOTH ARE GAGGED AND BLINDFOLDED.

36 INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT 36

Tabby, alone, is dragged down the hallway.

UNSEEN CAPTORS are bringing her towards an **ORNATE GREEN DOOR** at the end of the hall. Once they arrive, one of the captors knocks ***SHAVE AND A HAIR CUT.***

THE DOOR SLOWLY CREAKS OPENS--

A BLACK GLOVED HAND reaches out and touches Tabby's cheek. She trembles. The **VHS POV** zooms in on her frightened face.

WHISPERED VOICE
Do you like being filmed?
(beat)
Distributing poison for all of the world to see. Do you understand the danger you pose to so many?

Tears run out from beneath her blindfold.

WHISPERED VOICE (CONT'D)
No, of course, you don't.
(beat)
Because there is an evil inside of you. But I'm going to take it out.

Tabby panics and tries to run. She struggles away from her captors and - still gagged and blindfolded - clumsily barrels her way down the hall.

UNBEKNOWNST TO HER, AT THE END OF THE HALL IS A STAIRCASE.

Tabby runs off the top step and crashes down the stairs, landing hard on the living room floor.

37 INT. MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 37

Her ankle is badly dislocated from the fall. The misshaped joint creates a bulbous mass beneath her skin. The figure in black approaches the top of the steps and looks down at her.

WHISPERED VOICE
You can't escape who you already are.

She limps back to her feet, concussed and disoriented. She blindly trudges forward - unknowingly heading for a floor-to-ceiling glass window overlooking a pool on the hillside down below--

TABBY CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW--

She plummets nearly two stories and crumples onto the concrete pool deck, ***DEAD***. *Her body shredded from glass shards, and her skull cracked open from the fall.*

DISSOLVE TO:

38 EXT. LOS ANGELES - THE NEXT MORNING 38

The sun rises behind the HOLLYWOOD SIGN. *Another day, another chance for millions of dreams to come true...*

39 EXT. STUDIO LOT - MORNING 39

Maxine, in large sunglasses, sits in her car gripping the steering wheel. *She is still shaken from last night.*

A HONK behind her alerts her to the fact she hasn't pulled forward with traffic. She drives up to the guard booth.

SECURITY GUARD
May I help you?

MAXINE
I'm Maxine Minx.

He recognizes her and smiles.

SECURITY GUARD
Yes, you are.

He opens the gate and she drives onto the lot.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INT. MAKEUP AND WARDROBE OFFICE - MORNING 40

A manicured finger presses play on a cassette deck--

UNCHAINED MELODY by **RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS** accompanies A MONTAGE OF MAXINE GETTING A 1950's MAKEOVER.

NO MORE TIRED SMOKEY EYES OR VOLUMED HAIR. HER DISTINCT FRECKLES ARE COVERED BY MAKEUP AND SHE DONS A NEW BOUFFANT.

The French COSTUME DESIGNER (40s) pulls a black smock off to reveal her finished look.

COSTUME DESIGNER
Voilà! Meet VERONICA RUTLAND.

Maxine is shocked at the sight of herself. The flamboyant male DRAG QUEEN MAKEUP ARTIST (50s), smiles at her through a fog of hairspray.

MAKEUP ARTIST
How does it feel to be someone else?

Maxine looks deep into her own eyes.

MAXINE
(beat)
Better.

COSTUME DESIGNER
Just like a Hitchcock blonde. I need to take some Polaroids for the director.

She snaps photos of Maxine, who stands stoically in front of a white backdrop.

COSTUME DESIGNER (CONT'D)
Let's have a bit of fun, shall we? Strike a pose. Show me, Grace Kelly...Jayne Mansfield...

Maxine doesn't know the references very well.

COSTUME DESIGNER (CONT'D)
How about Christie Brinkley?

Maxine knows that one and poses.

COSTUME DESIGNER (CONT'D)
Now Farrah Fawcett. Linda Carter!

Maxine plays it up for the camera, striking numerous sexy poses with the confidence of Wonder Woman. The makeup artist walks over to her.

MAKEUP ARTIST
Don't forget the pièce de résistance. *Pearls.*

The costume designer drapes a PEARL NECKLACE around Maxine's neck. *The sight of the pearls jars her.*

COSTUME DESIGNER
Très magnifiqué. Cinema star.

The camera FLASHES. Maxine keeps posing.

IN ONE OF THE FLASHES, SHE SEES A BRIEF VISION OF *PEARL*.

It startles her. The costume designer sees she is unnerved.

COSTUME DESIGNER (CONT'D)
Ma chérie, tu n'as rien? You okay?

Maxine composes herself.

MAXINE
Yeah. Just didn't get enough sleep.

MAKEUP ARTIST
Girls need their beauty rest. Saves hours in the chair.

Maxine puts on a smile and returns to pose for one final BRIGHT WHITE CAMERA FLASH--

DISSOLVE TO:

41 EXT. LA RIVER - MORNING 41

A uniform POLICEMAN (30s) leads two LAPD DETECTIVES down the embankment into the LA RIVER:

DETECTIVE MARIANNE WILLIAMS (40s), well put together and always in pursuit of excellence (and her next promotion), walks with **DETECTIVE BEN TORRES** (50s), a cynical former-actor-turned-journeyman-detective with a five o'clock shadow.

POLICEMAN
Good morning, detectives. A couple of kids smoking dope came across them. Pretty gnarly stuff.

Williams intensely takes in the scene from behind a dark pair of AVIATOR GLASSES. Torres sips at his coffee as they navigate the decline.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
We were thinking it could be the Night Stalker again.

Detective Williams isn't interested in the rookie's input.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Thinking or hoping?

The policeman gets the message and hangs back as the detectives pass a concrete barrier and find two naked FEMALE BODIES floating facedown in the shallow water. The CORONER (50s) awaits them at the crime scene.

CORONER
Fresh meat. They haven't been out here very long. Ten or twelve hours at the most.

He points to a PENTAGRAM that has been BRANDED into the shredded shoulder of one of the floating bodies.

DETECTIVE TORRES
Jesus Christ. Looks like a Goddamn cattle brand did that.

TWO POLICEMEN roll the other corpse over. *IT'S AMBER.* A PENTAGRAM HAS BEEN BRANDED ON HER CHEEK.

The two detectives look at each other, *acknowledging this is now their unfortunate responsibility.*

42 EXT. STUDIO PARKING LOT - DAY 42

Back in her modern skimpy attire, Maxine walks across the parking lot to her car. She struggles to light a cigarette as a nerdy PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (20s), chases after her.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Miss Minx?

She stops and turns.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
I was told to give you this. It's your copy of the script and a prep schedule. They need you back on the lot today for a life cast.

MAXINE
A what?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
It's when they take a mold of your body for special effects.

She nods and takes the papers.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Liz, the director, plans to stop by and meet you after. Just a word of warning, she can be pretty scary. I've seen her blow a gasket more than once.
(beat)
I love your work, by the way.

She smiles and nods as the production assistant hurries back inside. Maxine flops down in her car and notices a FOLDED NOTE stuck to her windshield.

SHE USES THE WINDSHIELD WIPER TO PASS IT TO HERSELF.

The outside of the note reads: **FOR A GOOD TIME CALL 555-7278.**

SHE UNFOLDS THE PAPER AND IS GUTTED BY WHAT SHE FINDS--

CUT TO:

Maxine drops a quarter in a PAYPHONE and starts to dial the number from the note. She looks over at the protestors outside of the studio gates.

She locks eyes with one of them, the man with the cleft palate. He wears a T-SHIRT featuring an airbrushed photo of a young girl that looks eerily like LORRAINE (**from X**). His picket sign reads: **SATAN STOLE MY DAUGHTER.**

A HEAVY BREATHER picks up on the other end of the phone line.

MAXINE
(beat)
Who is this?

JOHN LABAT
(on phone)
I take it you had a chance to look at the videotape I sent?

MAXINE
(beat)
I don't own a VCR.

JOHN LABAT
(on phone)
The Lord hates lying lips. Don't you remember that from Sunday school?

Maxine isn't sure if she should respond.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Unless you wanna find yourself rotting away back in some Texas jailhouse, you'll meet me at the Bonaventure Hotel in one hour.
(beat)
Miss Miller...

She winces at the sound of that surname. The line goes dead. She looks down at the note from her car, finally revealing:

A TEXAS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL PICTURE. UNDER A PHOTO OF A YOUNG SMILING MAXINE IS HER REAL NAME: "**MAXINE MILLER.**"

43 INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL LOBBY - DAY 43

Maxine cautiously walks through the multi-floored lobby, uncertain of just who she is there to meet. She passes a man in a hat sitting in the corner. A large plate of half-eaten breakfast in front of him. He is drinking a BLOODY MARY.

JOHN LABAT
Quite some digs, huh? A long way from the Howard Johnson's in New Orleans, I can tell you that. They even have a rotating restaurant on the top floor.

She turns to him.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Say, ain't you that dirty movie actress? You're a lot taller in person. Then again I guess I've only ever seen you lying on your back.

Maxine approaches.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
John Labat. So charmed to finally make your acquaintance.

He extends his hand. Instead of shaking, she slaps the hat off of his head.

MAXINE
Cut the shit. What do you want from me?

He puts his arms up in mock surrender.

JOHN LABAT
Easy tiger, don't go shooting the messenger. I'm just a dick. A private detective. Hired to find you.

MAXINE
Hired by who?

JOHN LABAT
That there is privileged information. My employer would much prefer to reveal it in person.

He picks up his hat and takes a sip of his bloody Mary.

MAXINE
Bullshit. This is a fucking scam.

She turns to leave.

JOHN LABAT
Wayne Gilroy, Bobby-Lynne Parker, RJ Nichols, Lorraine Day, and Jackson Hollis.

She stops. Uncomfortable hearing their names.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Hearing those names bring back any old memories?
(beat)
How about Howard and Pearl Douglas? They never did catch who murdered them...

She hesitates. *How could he know so much?*

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
The past ain't finished with you, Maxine. And it's gonna keep knocking at your door until you open up and let it in.

He motions to the chair across from him. She sits.

MAXINE
I'm not saying I had anything to do with what happened to those people. But even if I did, *which I didn't*, there is no way there is any evidence that points to me.

JOHN LABAT
You absolutely certain of that?

Maxine isn't absolutely certain of anything right now.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Does it weigh on you? That you survived and your friends didn't? See, I'm an atheist, myself, but I reckon guilt like that would just crush me to pieces.

She seethes as he bites into an olive.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
I guess it's not show friends, it's show business, now isn't it?

MAXINE
How much do you want?

He shakes his head.

JOHN LABAT
It ain't about money.

MAXINE
Everything is about money.

JOHN LABAT
For a couple of whores like you and me, maybe so. But not for my employer. You can't buy your way out of retribution.

He slides an ENVELOPE across the table.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
There's gonna be a little soirée tonight at that address. It has been requested that you attend.

She looks down at the envelope. **166 STARLIGHT DRIVE** is written on the front.

MAXINE
(beat)
If I don't?

JOHN LABAT
What's the old saying? You'll never work in this town again?

He chuckles to himself and stands up.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Personally, I don't really care what you do. My check clears either way. But I wouldn't recommend it. My employer is a very powerful man. Don't play chicken with him.

She studies him as he puts on his hat and sunglasses.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
I'd hate for that lost film of yours to wind up all over the nightly news. Contrary to popular belief, there is such a thing as bad press.

He taps the envelope on the table.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Just ask your daddy...

She flinches. He smiles and walks off. Maxine opens the envelope. Inside is a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE from 1979 which reads:

DISGRACED TELEVANGELIST COMMITS SUICIDE.

Below the headline is a picture of her father, **ERNEST P. MILLER.** The sight of his photo makes Maxine uneasy.

She looks back at where John Labat wandered off and locks eyes with him as he takes the glass elevator up to his room. He smiles and tips his hat to her.

44 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - DAY 44

Maxine pulls to a stop in front of her building. She sits in the car, flustered, staring at the young photo of herself and the newspaper article about her father.

Under the headline it reads: **CHARLATAN FACED ACCUSATIONS OF FRAUD AND EMBEZZLEMENT.**

She flips down the visor and looks into the mirror. Preparing to give herself an affirmation.

MAXINE
I will not accept a life--

She loses her concentration.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
(trying again)
I will not accept--

Maxine slaps the visor back up and stuffs the papers into her bag. She looks up at the ADULT VIDEO STORE and has an idea. She starts to get out of the car.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
(O.S.)
Maxine Minx?

She turns to see the two LAPD DETECTIVES in front of the pizza place. Torres sips on a large drink with the pizza joint's logo.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
I'm detective Williams, this is Detective Torres. LAPD. Do you think we could borrow you for a quick chat?

Maxine looks worried. *Did they see her little freak out in the car?* She clutches her bag with the picture in it.

MAXINE
Why?

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Just want to find out if you've seen some people we're looking for. Won't take but five minutes.

She isn't interested. Torres steps up, holding two photos.

DETECTIVE TORRES
I get it, you're in showbiz. How about I just cut to the chase? Do you know these girls?

Maxine looks down to find the photos of AMBER and TABBY. She's surprised to see them.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
Amber James and Tabby Martin.
(glib)
We understand they are *work colleagues*. For lack of a better term...

Maxine gives him a look.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
(insinuating)
We also know you were one of the last people to see them.

MAXINE
Did something happen?

Williams takes off her aviators.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Any idea where they might be? Could be really helpful.

Maxine doesn't like how they are trying to play her.

MAXINE
(beat)
I don't talk to police.

She walks inside. Detective Williams looks at Torres.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
You fucked that up, not me.

DETECTIVE TORRES
What did I do?

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
That bullshit bravado. No wonder you never made it as an actor.

She walks off to their car.

DETECTIVE TORRES
I thought I was very convincing...

45 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - DAY 45

Maxine hurries inside and makes her way over to the window. She watches the detectives below as they get in their sedan and drive off. She rushes into the bedroom.

46 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 46

Maxine reaches under her bed and grabs the VHS tape.

47 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - DAY 47

Leon is sitting behind the front desk watching **"THE GREAT ALLIGATOR"** on the store's TV. Maxine approaches with the tape.

MAXINE
Is there a way to find out who made this?

LEON
Why? What's on it?

MAXINE
None of your business.

He is taken aback by her comment. He takes the tape and studies it.

LEON
There's nothing that will tell you who recorded it or where it was duped, but the tape is made by Quantegy. Not a popular brand. Usually, you see Japanese companies like Sony, Fuji, or TDK nowadays.
(MORE)

LEON (CONT'D)
I can check some old order forms and call around to see what regions it's still being sold in. Best I can think of.

MAXINE
Thanks.

She hurries out and Leon returns his attention to the TV. *The giant alligator is eating a swimmer.*

48 INT. SPECIAL FX WORKSHOP - DAY 48

SEVERAL JARRING CUTS OF GROTESQUE SPECIAL FX MAKE-UP PROPS SURROUNDING MAXINE: *A DECAPITATED BODY, A HEAD WITH NO EYES, AN EXPLODED CHEST WOUND, A WOMAN WITH NO FACE* AND AN ALLIGATOR MOUTH **(*All reminiscent of the deaths in "X"*).**

Maxine timidly sits on a stool, uncomfortable at the sight of all the gory puppets. She's wearing a bald cap and a small tube top.

The heavily tattooed FX ARTIST (30s) mixes a bucket of ALGINATE. She notices the SCAR on Maxine's left arm.

FX ARTIST
That's a pretty bitchin' scar. How'd you get it?

She looks at her arm, remembering--

MAXINE
I got shot.

FX ARTIST
Dang. Who shot you?

MAXINE
(beat)
It's a long story...

The FX artist nods and changes the subject.

FX ARTIST
Alright. I am gonna put this over your head now to make a mold.

MAXINE
Ok.

The FX artist life casts her head. As she covers her in alginate Maxine's vision goes black.

FX ARTIST
It will take about ten minutes to set. I have to run and get some more alginate. Sit tight. Remember to breathe. I'll be back.

The FX artist disappears into a supply closet.

Maxine sits still in the middle of the warehouse, the gel-like substance slowly hardening around her head.

The claustrophobia is intense.

AFTER SEVERAL NERVE-WRACKING MINUTES IN THE DARK--

Maxine can sense she's no longer alone in the room.

HANDS begin rubbing alginate on her body.

Not the hands of the FX artist. Old hands. *PEARL'S HANDS. Fondling and molesting her.*

MAXINE BEGINS TO HYPERVENTILATE.

The hands grip her neck and start to strangle her. She tries to stop them--

In her struggles, Maxine tips over backward in her chair, slamming down hard onto the ground. The FX artist tries to help, but Maxine flails at her, desperately clawing at the alginate on her face.

FX ARTIST (CONT'D)
Calm down, calm down! Breathe!

She finally clears her mouth and gasps for air.

CUT TO:

49 EXT. STUDIO BACKLOT - DAY 49

Maxine, looking the worse for wear, sits on the curb smoking a cigarette. Behind her, a platoon of WORLD WAR I soldiers march to a nearby set, and the PROTESTORS still picket outside of the studio gates.

A familiar woman in a leather jacket heads toward Maxine. It is the director, **ELIZABETH BENDER.** She looks at the protestors with disdain. *Especially the ones with signs reading: **THE PURITAN IS BLASPHEMY!***

ELIZABETH BENDER
Quite a pathetic scene, isn't it? Angry people are so easy to lead...

Maxine shares the sentiment.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
Heard you had a bit of a rough go this morning.

MAXINE
Apparently, I'm claustrophobic and never knew.

ELIZABETH BENDER
The unexpected joys of aging. Come with me, let's take a ride.

50 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY 50

Liz drives a golf cart along the fake New York City streets.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Fascinating how something can look so believable when in reality, it's all a facade.

Maxine doesn't respond. She has not yet fully recovered from her earlier incident. Liz notices.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
The producers don't want you in this picture.

This finally gets Maxine's attention.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
They think it's too controversial.
(beat)
Do you believe that? Cowards placating to the moral outcry of censors...Worrying that their Satanic horror movie could be *too controversial* if it had a porn star in it...

Maxine laughs.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
(serious)
They also said LA porn girls are cokeheads and flakes. Is that true?

Maxine gets serious.

MAXINE
No.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Good. Because I stuck my neck out in defending you. We saw hundreds of women for the role of Veronica. None of them had what you had. What you said in the audition...
(beat)
It was special. Raw and real and ruthless. Are you ruthless?

MAXINE
Yes, Ma'am.

Liz smile and turns the golf cart onto a WESTERN street.

ELIZABETH BENDER
We share that in common. I'm an artist. This town is prejudiced against artists. Scared of its own shadow when it comes to upsetting the status quo. But I say, if the pearl-clutching, moral majority types are going to protest our work, then we might as well make it bloody mean something. I didn't fly six thousand miles to do a picture about some housewife damsel in distress. It's time to shake things up. Veronica is a powder keg ready to blow. A killer but not a villain. She's Clint Eastwood meets Charles fucking Bronson and that's exactly what will make this stand apart from all the other sequels out there. I want to show that beneath the technicolor sheen of the 1950s, things were just as fucked up as today.

Maxine appreciates what she is saying.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
This could be the defining role of your career. So, I need to know you're willing to do whatever it takes.

MAXINE
I am.

ELIZABETH BENDER
As if your life depended on it?

MAXINE
(beat)
It does.

Liz slows the golf cart to a stop.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Very well, then. We'll prove everyone wrong together...In a beautiful fucking bloodbath.

Maxine smiles. Elizabeth nods to the building they've stopped in front of.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
Do you know what this is?

Maxine looks up.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
It's the motel from "Psycho."

The mention of Psycho makes Maxine uncomfortable.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
They even filmed a sequel here a few years back.

Maxine leans back in her seat to catch a glimpse of the famous house behind the motel.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
A serial killer disguised as an old woman...America was too prude to ever see it coming. Some things never change...

Maxine notices something moving behind the curtains in the upstairs window of the house.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
I'd like you to visit the set tomorrow. We're shooting the flashbacks.

The curtains slip aside, revealing PEARL looking out at Maxine from the window.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
Molly Bennett, who played Clara in the original, will be working. I think it would be good for you to meet her and get a feel for what it will be like on the set. She can show you the ropes, so to speak. I don't mean to be disrespectful, but this isn't a stag film. It is a major motion picture.

Maxine is still entranced by the sight of Pearl.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
VHS may have been responsible for The Puritan's success, but we are not a 'video nasty' anymore. We are theatrical. They don't show stag films on nine hundred screens. Are you listening to me?

Maxine snaps out of it. Nods at Liz.

MAXINE
Uh, yeah.

She looks back at the house. The window is empty.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
I'll be there.

Liz sizes her up one last time.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Would you like a bit of free advice?

Maxine nods.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
Look around. You've made it to the belly of the beast.
Congratulations. Very few come this far. But to stay here you must make it your obsession.
Eliminate all other distractions. Because if you take your eye off the prize for even a moment, the beast will spit you right back out where you came from.
(beat)
And it may never get a taste for you again.

51 INT. MAXINE'S CAR - DAY 51

Maxine drives home, thinking about Liz's advice. The AM RADIO STATION spouts Christian talk radio.

CHRISTIAN PREACHER
As it says in Corinthians, we are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down but never abandoned by God. We may get knocked down, but we are never destroyed.

She looks in the rearview mirror and notices a Cadillac following her.

CHRISTIAN PREACHER (CONT'D)
Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

SHE TURNS ONTO ANOTHER STREET. THE CADILLAC FOLLOWS--

CHRISTIAN PREACHER (CONT'D)
We live in constant danger of death because we serve Jesus so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies.

She slows to a stop at a red light in front of CIRCUS LIQUORS. The Caddy pulls up behind. Frustrated, Maxine throws the car in park and gets out.

52 EXT. VALLEY STREET - DAY 52

She walks towards the Cadillac, the points of her CAR KEYS positioned between her knuckles. As she approaches, the window rolls down, revealing John Labat.

He is holding a VHS CAMCORDER, filming her as she marches towards him. He is wearing a brand new pair of RAY BAN WAYFARER SUNGLASSES.

JOHN LABAT
Just think of me like the paparazzi. Wherever you go, I'll be there.
(beat)
Say, how do you like my fancy new shades? They're "I-talian."

She lunges forward and punches him in the face repeatedly with her keys - *Breaking his glasses.*

MAXINE
I don't know who you think you're fucking with, but I ain't her!

He yelps and tries to block her strikes as best he can. She grabs the camcorder and spikes it onto the street.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
If I see you in my rearview again, you're dead! Hear me?!

She starts to walk away, then turns back to kick the MIRROR off the side of his door. Labat wipes the blood off his face.

JOHN LABAT
Oh, you're gonna pay for this! I'll see to it. Just you wait!

By now, the traffic light has turned green and cars are HONKING around her. She gets back in her car to the APPLAUSE OF A CHURCH CONGREGATION coming from the radio.

Maxine slams on the gas and peels out into the intersection. Labat and his broken camera are left in the dust.

53 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - MAIN ROOM - DAY 53

Maxine walks into the club. There are two IDENTICAL TWIN REDHEAD GIRLS (20s) talking to her agent, **TEDDY** (60s) - a muscular man in a sharkskin suit sipping on a Manhattan.

TEDDY
Maxine. Meet Lana and Donna. I brought them in on my lunch break for an audition. They're former Double Mint twins. Can you believe that? I said they should have been Big Red with that hair.

MAXINE
Have you seen Shep?

TEDDY
Yeah, he's in the office.
(to the twins)
How about you two get up there and start warming up those poles?

Maxine doesn't respond, she just keeps moving.

54 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - OFFICE - DAY 54

Maxine pushes through a velvet curtain and enters the back office. A television playing commercials sits atop a large safe. Several HANDGUNS are lying around on the desk. A SMALL DOG is busy licking one of them.

Shepard is counting STACKS OF MONEY. He is wearing his SATAN'S SERVANTS MOTORCYCLE CLUB vest. He looks up at Maxine.

SHEPARD
How you going? You alright? You look tired.

MAXINE
I need a little something. To help me focus.

SHEPARD
Sweet as.

He nods and opens the safe. It is FULL OF INDIVIDUAL BAGS OF COCAINE. He grabs one.

SHEPARD (CONT'D)
Have you seen Amber?

MAXINE
No.

SHEPARD
I sent Pam to her place but couldn't raise her. She didn't get home last night and I reckon her roommate called the cops.
(beat)
Did they come and see you?

MAXINE
Yeah.

SHEPARD
You tell them anything?

She shakes her head, NO.

SHEPARD (CONT'D)
Good girl.

The commercials on the TV give way to a breaking news report on the Night Stalker.

NEWS ANCHOR
The survivor of the brutal attack last night believes it to have been the Night Stalker who is responsible. Authorities are following all witness testimonies in hopes of zeroing in on the identity of this vicious serial killer who has already claimed seven victims in the Los Angeles area.

SHEPARD
She'll be fine. Probably just fell in love or something.

Maxine looks worried. He clocks it.

SHEPARD (CONT'D)
Don't worry. I already have people out looking. If anything bad happened, I assure you, I will track down who did it and feed them to the fucking dogs.

She nods as he hands her the cocaine.

SHEPARD (CONT'D)
Teddy told me about the horror flick. That's a big deal. I'm happy for you. Finally going legit.

MAXINE
Thanks.

She stuffs the drugs in her pocket.

SHEPARD
Yeah, no worries.

55 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - MAIN ROOM - DAY 55

SISTERS ARE DOIN' IT FOR THEMSELVES by **EURYTHMICS** rumbles from the jukebox as Maxine walks back through the strip club.

SHEPARD
Anything you ever need. No matter what. I am here for it. We do good business together. Don't let Hollywood make you forget where you came from.

She winces at the thought. Teddy overhears and mocks offense.

TEDDY
(teasing)
What am I chopped liver? I thought we were on the same team! I'm gonna quit bringing you clients if you keep talking like that.

Maxine passes the twins who are dancing together by the jukebox and pushes her way out the door.

56 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - DAY 56

Maxine walks in. Leon is behind the desk watching the FARMER'S DAUGHTERS porn tape.

MAXINE
Damnit Leon turn it off!

LEON
(confused)
What?

MAXINE
Turn it off, now!

LEON
Ok!

MAXINE
I said it was none of your fucking business.

LEON
Sorry...

He ejects the tape. They share an awkward moment as he hands her back the VHS.

LEON (CONT'D)
(beat)
The company is based in Alabama. Most likely it was purchased regionally so you're looking at somewhere down south.
(beat)
Is everything ok?

Maxine starts to lose it.

MAXINE
No! It's not! I have to learn my lines, I have to work on my accent.
(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)
I need to be perfect for this role because I may never get the chance again!

LEON
Chill out.

MAXINE
No, Leon! This is my life! And it was supposed to be getting better!
(beat)
I've worked too hard and been through too much to lose it all now!

She kicks over a VHS display. He is shocked by her outburst.

LEON
Yo, what is going on?

She paces around, frustrated.

LEON (CONT'D)
Maxine--

She explodes - *desperate for someone to understand.*

MAXINE
(interrupting)
I'm not from fucking Oklahoma!

CUT TO:

57 EXT. LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY 57

Maxine and Leon walk up to a looming masonic building in downtown LA.

58 INT. LIBRARY - DAY 58

They sit in front of the MICROFILM MACHINE, scanning newspaper articles from Texas, in 1979. Leon spins the nob.

MAXINE
(seeing something)
There--

He stops and zooms in on an article. **THE TEXAS PORN STAR MASSACRE.**

LEON
Fuck me...

It reads: *Multiple Bodies Found on Farm in Fordell, Texas. Victims were attempting to make an adult film. Authorities scramble to find suspects.*

LEON (CONT'D)
So all those people I just watched are dead?

MAXINE
Yeah.

LEON
That's macabre.
(beat)
And you've been keeping this a secret the whole time?

She nods and he continues to scan the article.

MAXINE
(sarcastic)
I always wanted to end up in the papers...

LEON
It doesn't mention you.

MAXINE
Because I got away.
(beat)
I made a deal with the devil that night. Nothing was ever gonna stand in the way of my dreams again.

He keeps reading.

LEON
Who else knows about this?

MAXINE
Nobody.

LEON
Then how did the footage get out?

He scrolls to a picture of the farm and **SHERIFF DENTLER (*From "X"*)**. His image haunts Maxine.

MAXINE
Him. It has to be him. Fucking cop.

59 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DUSK 59

Leon stands in a PHONE BOOTH dialing. Maxine anxiously listens in from outside.

LEON
Yeah, Sheriff's Department, Fordell Texas.

OPERATOR
One moment.

LEON
(to Maxine)
It's ringing.

OFFICER MITCHELL
Sheriff's Department.

LEON
Sheriff Dentler, please.

OFFICER MITCHELL
He's not in. Can I take a message?

LEON
When will he be back?

OFFICER MITCHELL
He's out of town on a hunting trip for the week.

Leon hangs up the phone and looks at Maxine. *His look confirms what she already knew.*

60 INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING 60

Maxine and Leon step into the elevator of a downtown office building.

LEON
Are you sure this is a good idea?

MAXINE
(beat)
He's not just a talent agent...

61 INT. TNA AGENCY - EVENING 61

The elevator opens and Maxine and Leon walk into the lobby and up to ANGEL, her agent's middle-aged assistant, who is busy Lemon Pledging the TNA sign.

MAXINE
I need to see Teddy.

ANGEL
You don't have an appointment. Mr. Night is on a very important call.

Maxine storms into his office anyway.

62 INT. TNA AGENCY - OFFICE - EVENING 62

Maxine bursts into her agent's office. The wood-paneled walls are covered in soft-core porn and low-budget horror movie posters. Teddy is lying on a WEIGHT BENCH lifting DUMBBELLS and talking on a hands-free telephone headset.

TEDDY
I can get you the bearer bonds, I just need access to your junkyard for a couple of hours--
(to Maxine)
Whoa, whoa, what are you doing downtown?

MAXINE
We need to talk.

Angel walks in after.

ANGEL
I'm sorry, Mr. Night, she just rushed right past me.

Teddy sees Leon in the doorway with Angel.

TEDDY
Who the hell is he?

MAXINE
You're my lawyer, right?

Teddy looks at her, suspiciously.

TEDDY
(into phone)
Frankie, let me call you back.

He puts down the weights and hangs up the phone. He motions for Angel to leave. Leon exits to the lobby with her.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
(beat)
Entertainment lawyer, yes.

MAXINE
So if I tell you something, we have confidentiality? You can't tell anybody else?

TEDDY
(serious)
Technically that is correct. Why, what have you done?

CUT TO:

63 INT. TNA AGENCY - EVENING 63

Leon sits on the couch anxiously tapping his foot. He looks at the posters on the wall. Angel is staring at him. He singles out "The Dead be Damned" movie poster. A horror western featuring a large-breasted can-can girl.

LEON
"The Dead be Damned." Great flick. Amazing prosthetics. Very few people think about the craftsmanship that goes into creating it all. Hundreds of talented artists manufacturing...

Angel clears her throat. He looks up and realizes she isn't interested.

LEON (CONT'D)
(changing subject)
Is there a bathroom on this floor?

ANGEL
Down the hall. Third door on the left.

He gets up.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Take the key.

She hands him a large wooden stick with a key attached.

64 INT. TNA AGENCY - OFFICE - EVENING 64

Maxine is slumped in a chair. Teddy sits on the front of his desk now having heard the whole story.

TEDDY
Relax. Leave it with me. You hear from that detective again you tell him to call your agent. I'm in charge of this negotiation now. I've brokered a lot more than motion pictures in my day.

Maxine is still nervous.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Trust me. Nobody is more passionate about your career than me. I'll go to jail over it that's how passionate I am. Nothing is gonna get in the way of your big break. He thinks he's the big bad wolf? Wrong. *I'm* the big bad wolf, and I eat podunk sheriffs for breakfast. The only thing you need to worry about right now is being undeniable in that picture, capiche?

She nods.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Good. Now, get rid of that tape. Keep your mouth shut. You don't know nothin. Teddy's got this.

65 INT. MAXINE'S CAR - NIGHT 65

Maxine and Leon drive home in silence. Leon tries to lighten the mood by turning on the radio. A Christian preacher shouts out positive self-affirmations from the speakers.

CHRISTIAN PREACHER
A wise man once said that the fear of pain is far worse than pain itself. No one suffers when in search of their dreams, because that very search is at its core an encounter with God.

Leon looks at Maxine, surprised.

LEON
You listen to Christian radio?

MAXINE
(beat)
My father was a televangelist.
(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)
I grew up around it. It helps me think.

LEON
Wait...
(beat)
Are you telling me that you're a preacher's daughter, too?

MAXINE
(beat)
Was. He's dead. Killed himself after he lost everything.

LEON
Oh, sorry.

MAXINE
Don't be. He was an asshole.
(beat)
He got what he deserved.

Leon tries to process it all.

LEON
This shit is wild...

She doesn't wanna talk about it anymore. She turns the radio dial to a music station. **LOVE LIKE BLOOD** by **KILLING JOKE** plays--

66 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT 66

Maxine tosses the VHS tape into the bathtub and sprays it with AQUA NET. She holds up the photo of herself as a child.

Leon KNOCKS on the door.

LEON
I have to get back down to the store. You wanna come hang out a while?

MAXINE
I need to learn my lines.

He nods.

LEON
For all the horror movies I watch I never thought I'd end up in one.

MAXINE
How do you think I feel?

LEON
(beat)
Typecast?

She lights a match and ignites the corner of the photo. She watches her face warp and burn for a moment and then drops the picture in the tub.

LEON (CONT'D)
I'll go with you later. To that house, if you want. Just as like backup, or whatever. I still got the one good arm. And my First Blood Part II Bowie knife.

He pulls a large BOWIE KNIFE (like the one Rambo used) out of his waistband and shadowboxes it in the air.

MAXINE
I'm done with the past. I'm not gonna be intimidated for having ambition.

The photo and VHS tape are engulfed in flames.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
If that Sheriff really had anything more than accusations, I would have been locked up a long time ago.

Leon nods.

LEON
Well, it was fun while it lasted. Thanks for getting me out of the house...And for confiding in me today. If it's any consolation, I know how hard it can be pretending to be someone else.

He turns to leave.

LEON (CONT'D)
Oh, and don't tell me anything that happens in the script. I wanna be surprised.

She nods and looks down at the twisted blob of burnt plastic still smoking in the tub.

67 EXT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 67

Leon walks up to the door and keys inside. He pulls a sign off the window that says: "BE BACK IN 1 HOUR."

JOHN LABAT, FACE BANDAGED FROM MAXINE'S EARLIER ATTACK, IS ANGRILY WATCHING FROM ACROSS THE STREET...

68 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 68

Maxine snorts a line of COCAINE.

She tucks her pistol under her pillow, gets in bed, and opens her PURITAN II SCRIPT. She uncaps a HIGHLIGHTER and begins to trace her lines with the neon yellow marker.

THE FIRST BULK OF LINES READS: **THE DEVIL COMES TO ME AT NIGHT. FEEDING A COMPULSION. AN URGE TO KILL.**

CUT TO:

69 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 69

BURN IN HELL by **TWISTED SISTER** plays on the boombox as a POV enters the store. Leon is behind the register reading FANGORIA. His Bowie knife sits on the desk. The POV stops in front of him. He looks up from his magazine.

LEON
Can I help you?

CUT TO:

70 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 70

Maxine lies in bed highlighting her script.

THE LINES READ: **THE GUILTY HAVE SUFFERED. AND NOW SO SHALL THE INNOCENT.**

CUT TO:

71 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 71

Leon is still staring back at the POV.

LEON
Look, man, I ain't in that kinda business no more. I'm retired.
(MORE)

LEON (CONT'D)
This is just a video store and we're closing soon.

CUT TO:

72 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 72

THE NEON YELLOW HIGHLIGHTER PASSES OVER THE LINES: **THE ONLY EMOTION WHICH EVER BRINGS FORTH CHANGE...*IS PAIN*.**

CUT TO:

73 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 73

Leon walks the POV outside and closes the door. He watches out the window as they go, and locks the door.

Leon flicks a switch that turns off the OPEN SIGN and all of the lights in the front window.

The only light left is the red neon glow from the pizza shop.

UNBEKNOWNST TO LEON, A FIGURE IN BLACK STANDS BEHIND HIM - ***HOLDING HIS BOWIE KNIFE--***

CUT TO:

74 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 74

MAXINE HIGHLIGHTS THE LINE: **THE WORLD SHALL FEEL MY PAIN!**

THE STAGE DIRECTION READS: ***VERONICA SWINGS HER BLADE!***

CUT TO:

75 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 75

The blade of the Bowie knife slashes across the back of Leon's neck, splitting open his flesh.

He spins around in shock. The knife slashes AGAIN, down his face, TEARING OPEN HIS CHEEK AND UPPER LIP!

CUT TO:

76 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 76

MAXINE CONTINUES READING THE STAGE DIRECTION: **IN A POSSESSED TRANCE, VERONICA FOLLOWS HIM TO THE GROUND. RUTHLESSLY STABBING OVER AND OVER AGAIN UNTIL HIS INSIDES SPILL OUT.**

CUT TO:

77 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 77

Leon blocks the knife with his CAST. The blade sticks. He crawls along the ground trying to get away.

His UNKOWNN ATTACKER IN BLACK GLOVES pulls the knife out of the cast and continues to ruthlessly stab him in the back.

CUT TO:

78 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 78

MAXINE FLIPS THE PAGE AND KEEPS READING: **THE BODY FINALLY GOES COLD. VERONICA RETURNS TO HER SENSES. SHE LOOKS AT THE BLOOD ON HER HANDS.**

MAXINE HIGHLIGHTS THE LINE OF DIALOGUE: ***MY GOD...WHAT HAVE I DONE?***

CUT TO:

79 INT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 79

Leon rolls over and takes his dying breath. The attacker RIPS the SATANIC EARRING out of his ear.

CUT TO:

80 EXT. ADULT VIDEO STORE - NIGHT 80

John Labat waits in his Cadillac across the street sipping on a bottle of PEPTO BISMOL. The passenger door opens and the figure in black sits down inside.

Disgusted, Labat watches as the figure uses a towel to wipe the BLOOD off of their gloves in a slow, fetishizing manner.

Worried he's gotten in over his head, Labat puts the car in gear and drives off.

81 INT. MAXINE’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING 81

Maxine wakes to the loud sound of her PHONE RINGING. She lies in bed, covered in script pages.

82 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - MORNING 82

She pads out into the hall and answers the phone.

MAXINE
Hello?

TEDDY
I did some digging. The number you gave me for the P.I. has been disconnected. I checked it for an address but it’s unlisted being that it’s a toll number. No LLC registered either. Have to hand it to the pig, he’s no amateur, but Teddy’s still got a few tricks up his sleeve. How you feeling?

MAXINE
Better. Gonna visit the set.

TEDDY
Remember, keep it by the book over there. To be early is to be on time. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Just ask Ed McMahon.

Maxine is distracted by the CHIRP of an ambulance siren. She can hear a commotion outside.

MAXINE
Teddy, let me call you back.

She hangs up the phone, heads to the window, and looks down. Police cars and ambulances surround the building.

83 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - MORNING 83

Maxine steps outside. The commotion is focused around the adult video store.

As she gets closer she sees a covered, bloody body being rolled out on a gurney. The body’s arm is wrapped in a CAST.

MAXINE
Leon...

SLOW MOTION - Maxine rushes over to the gurney and pulls at the sheet. She uncovers Leon's face.

A PENTAGRAM has been carved on his forehead. Detective Torres intercepts her and grabs her as she SCREAMS.

84 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER THAT DAY 84

Maxine sits in the hospital hallway in shock. Dried tears stain her face. Detective Williams gets a can of NEW COKE out of a vending machine. She hands it to Maxine and then motions for her to follow.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
I need to show you something.

85 INT. MORGUE - DAY 85

The detective leads Maxine into the morgue. Torres pulls back the sheets on two bodies, revealing Tabby and Amber.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
They were found yesterday. Fished out of the LA river.

Maxine is shocked by the sight.

DETECTIVE TORRES
You heard of the night stalker?

She nods.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
Well, if you know something about this Satanic shit, we need to hear it because there's a killer out there.

Maxine doesn't answer.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Look, we don't think the night stalker committed these crimes, but whoever did is setting the bodies up to look that way. And you're the common denominator. *Why?*

DETECTIVE TORRES
If three people I knew were murdered in three days I'd be pretty scared. Are you scared?

Maxine still doesn't answer. Tears drip down her face.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
If I was scared I'd ask for help.

MAXINE
That's because you're a pussy.

DETECTIVE TORRES
What did you just say?

MAXINE
You can't help me.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Why not?

DETECTIVE TORRES
How come you don't want us to find out who did this? It's pissing me off. What are you hiding? The number one thing a cop hates is an unsolved case. And let me tell you, the longer you keep information the worse it gets. Do you really want us to take a closer look at some of the individuals you do business with?

Maxine folds her arms and looks at the floor.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
That's right. Actions have consequences. You're not just some barefoot bitch in a bus station, you have a lot to lose here. So you better watch yourself.

Detective Williams steps in to diffuse the situation.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Alright, let's pump the brakes.
(beat)
Maxine, we don't care what kinda partying you're into, or what kinda tricks you're turning. We're not vice and we're not narcotics, we're homicide. The only thing we care about are these bodies - and making sure we don't find any more of them.

DETECTIVE TORRES
You Hollywood girls are so obsessed with being famous that you don't realize how easy it is to become infamous. It could be you on one of these slabs.

Maxine stares at the dead bodies.

MAXINE
But it's not.
(beat)
So can I go? I don't really wanna be here anymore. I'm gonna be late for work.

Detective Torres is tired of her attitude.

DETECTIVE TORRES
Thinking about your career at a time like this? With friends like you who needs enemies?

Maxine walks out. Williams gives Torres a look.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
What? You didn't like that performance either?

She rolls her eyes.

86 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY 86

Detective Williams follows Maxine into the hall.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Hey, hold up. I know you don't think you can trust a cop, but all I wanna see is this freak behind bars. Hand to God.

Maxine spins around, annoyed.

MAXINE
And what am I supposed to do? Just give up on everything I've worked for? How would that fix anything?

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
You're supposed to help me save the next girl's life. Please...

Maxine stares back at her, tired of being lectured.

MAXINE
Maybe she should save herself.
(beat)
I did.

87 INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY 87

Elizabeth Bender sits behind a video monitor. In a SURREALIST SCENE, Clara, the puritan farm girl, lies on the floor of a small FOREST SET. She is holding an APPLE.

Maxine walks up behind Liz and eavesdrops on the monitor. Clara bites into the apple and an explosion of blood erupts onto her face.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Cut!

The scene stops and the costume designer steps in with a towel for the actress. Elizabeth is disappointed.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
The blood is wrong. Kensington Gore. Looks like a bad Hammer picture.

She sees Maxine.

MAXINE
I'm sorry I'm late, I was--

ELIZABETH BENDER
(interrupting)
Hearing you blame something would only irritate me more. The most precious thing in life is time and we never have enough of it. Especially on a production. Waste mine again and you are out. I can have the second-best girl on the Concorde tonight...Frothing at the mouth to take your place.

MAXINE
It won't happen again. I promise.

Liz looks at her.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Follow me.

Liz gets up and walks into the set. Maxine follows.

88 INT. FOREST SET - DAY 88

Liz and Maxine walk on set. **MOLLY BENNETT** (20s), the British, former child star who plays Clara, looks for approval.

MOLLY
(to Liz)
How was it, Liz?

ELIZABETH BENDER
Disappointing, frankly. I have done all different types of work over the years and some things never change.

Liz dips her hands in the fake blood and applies it to Molly's face. Maxine watches as she finger-paints the syrup to look perfect.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
When you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.

The costume designer hands her a towel to clean her hands.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
Molly Bennett, meet Maxine Minx. My latest fascination.

MOLLY
Pleased to meet you.

She extends her hand and Maxine shakes it. The fake blood gets on her.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Sorry.

ELIZABETH BENDER
It's official. We all have blood on our hands now.
(to the crew)
Let's take it again from after the bite!

CUT TO:

89 EXT. SOUND STAGE - LATER 89

Molly and Maxine walk down the street away from the crew. Molly's chin is stained red from the fake blood.

MOLLY
I still pinch myself walking around this backlot. So much history. Who was the first star you remember seeing on TV?

MAXINE
My daddy.

MOLLY
Oh, is he an actor?

MAXINE
Something like that.

MOLLY
Did he have any good advice? There's so much we can learn from previous generations.

MAXINE
(beat)
He said to always give them a show.

MOLLY
I love that. Ingrid Bergman was my first. She said, "Be yourself, the world worships an original." I really connected with her. You know, people tried to get her to change her name when she first came to Hollywood. She wouldn't do it. That wasn't what she saw for herself. Such inspiring belief. Do you ever do visualizations?

Maxine is unsure of what she means.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Sounds weird, I know, but don't worry, it's spiritual, not religious.

Maxine is unconvinced.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
A few years back I met this guru from New Delhi who told me that unless I had a clear mental image of everything I wanted, and I mean right down to the very last detail. Then the universe wouldn't know how to manifest it for me.
(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)
(beat)
So I started doing it.

MAXINE
And it worked?

MOLLY
Honestly, I don't think I'd be here without it.

Maxine takes it all in.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Give it a try. You never know. I mean, if you want to be a star you kinda have to believe in the impossible don't you think?

Maxine nods as Molly stops at her trailer. She looks around to ensure they are alone.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Ok, look, here's the truth. Liz is a genius and a mentor. Just do whatever she asks of you. Don't get on her bad side. And don't overthink the acting. Liz hates method actors. You know the types that always need a reason to stand here or say this or that. You're in her reality now, not yours. Do what she says and you'll get tons of jobs. She's very loyal to people she trusts. Look at me. I was quite literally burnt to a crisp in the last film and here I am resurrected. A working actor. Maybe not a household name yet, but at least my health insurance won't expire. Plus, my charred corpse's scream has been immortalized in cinema history. How many girls from a council estate in North Yorkshire can say that?

Molly imitates her famous SCREAM FACE. Maxine takes it in.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
I can tell you're photogenic. You have a memorable face and a great bod. You'll take to horror like a duck to water. I gotta go and get changed.
(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)
I was invited to a party tonight in the hills for some big out-of-town producer. See you around?

MAXINE
Yeah. Thanks.

MOLLY
Of course. Girls gotta look out for one another in this business. Nice to meet you, Nadine!

She goes inside her trailer.

90 EXT. WESTERN STREET - DAY 90

Maxine walks down a studio street, mocked up as an 1800s WESTERN MAIN STREET. John Labat steps out into the street in front of her. *A high noon showdown.*

JOHN LABAT
I told you not to play chicken, didn't I?

Maxine looks down the alleyway and sees Liz talking to the producer and a few assistants.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Let's try and do this without making a scene.

John Labat opens his jacket to reveal a PISTOL. Maxine turns and runs. Labat chases after her. She hurries around the corner and out into a Mexican town set.

91 EXT. OLD MEXICO TOWN - DAY 91

Maxine hides behind one of the decorated buildings. Labat enters the town set and spots her. She takes off running again, this time inside one of the adobe homes.

92 INT. MEXICAN HOME - DAY 92

Maxine searches for a place to hide. Labat busts in after her. He pushes her against the wall and she kicks back against him, knocking him into the window, and breaking the glass. He goes for his GUN as she takes off towards a door.

93 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY 93

Maxine hurries out of the backside of the set onto New York Street. Labat is still in hot pursuit. She runs across the backlot street and inside one of the New York buildings.

94 INT. NEW YORK BUILDING - DAY 94

Maxine runs up the stairs inside the unfinished set and out another door.

95 EXT. COURTHOUSE SQUARE - DAY 95

She bursts into the courthouse square, sprints down the steps, and up a grassy hill towards the BATES MOTEL.

96 EXT. BATES MOTEL - DAY 96

Maxine hurries past the Bates Motel and climbs the stone staircases of the infamous PSYCHO HOUSE.

97 INT. PSYCHO HOUSE - DAY 97

She yanks open the front door and hides inside. *There is no interior set. Only raw wood beams. Nowhere else to go.*

Labat eventually trots up to the house - *assuming it's her hiding spot.* Just as he reaches for the door--

SECURITY GUARD
(O.S.)
Excuse me. You can't be up there.

Busted, Labat turns to see a SECURITY GUARD eyeing him. Labat looks back at the sheer-covered glass window that Maxine hides behind. She listens from inside.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
Sir, what are you--

JOHN LABAT
(interrupting)
I apologize. My morbid curiosities must have got the best of me.
(loud so she hears)
A lot of famous horrors took place in there. Brutal killings and whatnot.

SECURITY GUARD
(skeptical)
Can I see your pass?

Labat pats his pockets.

JOHN LABAT
You know, I don't know what I did with it. I am a lost ball in the high weeds today.

He looks at the guard's name tag. **TODD.**

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Maybe you can help straighten me out, Todd. That's my nieces Godsons name. What do you say we take a walk back to the gate you and me? Make this right.

He puts his arm around Todd and walks off. Maxine breathes a sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

98 EXT. SOUND STAGE - DAY 98

Maxine anxiously walks back past the set. She sees Labat by the guard gate still explaining himself to SECURITY.

ELIZABETH BENDER
(O.S.)
Maxine

She turns and sees Liz.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
Everyone is entitled to one mistake. I can forgive, but I don't forget.

Maxine nods.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
I hope you realize just how rare success truly is. It took a long time for me to get to where I am today. This is more than just a horror picture. It is an opportunity for me to prove to the world I'm not a one-hit-wonder.
(MORE)

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
That I have a meaningful voice in this industry. I can't afford to have anyone mess that up.

MAXINE
I understand. I really do. It has to be perfect. I'll do whatever you say.

Liz nods. *In a way, these two are kindred spirits.*

ELIZABETH BENDER
Take the weekend. Let loose. Have some fun. Because Monday the work begins. And I'll be expecting your absolute best.

MAXINE
Yes, Ma'am.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Oh, and Maxine...Whatever is going on in your life that is interfering with this picture...I don't care what it takes...*Squash it*.

Maxine looks back at Labat who waves to her as he is escorted off the lot. He disappears into the crowd of MORAL MAJORITY PROTESTORS.

MAXINE
(beat)
I intend to.

99 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 99

WELCOME TO THE PLEASUREDOME by **FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD** BUILDS - *ACCOMPANYING A MONTAGE OF MAXINE GETTING READY FOR ACTION.*

SHE FASHIONS HER "NEW WAVE"-STYLE MAKEUP INTO MODERN WAR PAINT. COLORFUL AIRBRUSHED LINES ACROSS HER EYES AND CHEEKS--

CUT TO:

100 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT 100

Maxine walks in, passing the pole-dancing redhead twins as she heads straight for Shepard at the bar. She whispers something in his ear that upsets him--

CUT TO:

101 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 101

MAXINE SLIDES INTO HER SEXIEST, TRENDY ATTIRE - A SHORT, SKIN-TIGHT BLACK DRESS WITH CUT-OUT SHAPES EXPOSING HER FLESH--

CUT TO:

102 INT. TNA AGENCY - NIGHT 102

Angel listens to someone on the phone and then turns to Teddy, who immediately looks concerned--

CUT TO:

103 EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT 103

Frankie Love, the 'roided out porn actor, opens a cage full of BARKING DOBERMANS for Shepard--

CUT TO:

104 INT. THE LANDING STRIP - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 104

Maxine cuts out a thick line of COCAINE and snorts it deep into her sinuses. She stares at herself in the mirror. Re-energized and determined.

MAXINE
Let's go to work.

CUT TO:

105 INT. NEON HEARTS NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT 105

WELCOME TO THE PLEASUREDOME FINALLY KICKS IN FULL BLAST--

A sea of sweaty bodies collide together on the dance floor of the industrial nightclub. Maxine, dressed to the nines, pushes her way into the center of the action.

She lets loose under the hypnotic flashing lights. Gyrating amongst the strangers - *making herself <u>BAIT</u>.*

AND AS IF ON CUE--

John Labat enters - roaming the club - *HUNTING.*

MAXINE CAN FEEL HIS EYES ON HER. *But she's one step ahead.*

SPLIT SCREEN - Maxine sneaks off towards the bathrooms and Labat follows. A cat-and-mouse pursuit, snaking their way through a human maze of thrusting bodies.

She passes the DJ BOOTH and eventually disappears from view inside the LADIES' ROOM. Labat hurries after and bumps into a large dancer - knocking the bandage on his nose loose.

106 INT. NEON HEARTS NIGHT CLUB - LADIES' ROOM - NIGHT 106

Labat enters the graffiti-covered bathroom after her. It is empty other than whoever may be hiding in the stalls...

JOHN LABAT
Come out come out wherever you are...

One by one, he stalks the stalls, kicking open the doors.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
The reason people hire me is because I'm very good at what I do.

Each stall he kicks open is empty. He rips off his crooked nose bandage revealing six stitches and swelling on his face.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
I can find anyone. No matter how badly they want to stay hidden. Do you know why? Because I know how criminals think. I'm one too. The only difference is. I don't pretend not to be.

He kicks open the last door and discovers the window is open above the toilet.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Shit.

107 EXT. NEON HEARTS NIGHT CLUB - LOADING DOCK - NIGHT 107

John Labat runs out the back door of the club onto the loading dock. Maxine is waiting for him in the parking lot.

MAXINE
You may have the cops fooled, but you don't fool me.

He smirks and pulls his gun from his waistband. Unbeknownst to him, Shep is sneaking up out of the shadows with a BASEBALL BAT, right behind him.

SHEPARD
Lights out, bro.

He swings hard and hits him in the back of the head. Labat falls forward off of the loading dock and belly flops onto the pavement, unconscious.

CUT TO:

108 EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT 108

Labat wakes up in his Cadillac. As he becomes aware of his surroundings, he realizes he is trapped in a car crusher. He tries to open the car door, but it is jammed shut.

Maxine stands in front of him. Labat looks over to see three ravenous JUNKYARD DOGS being held on a leash by Shepard. Teddy and Frankie each watch from a distance.

MAXINE
Do you remember what I told you would happen if I ever saw you again?

JOHN LABAT
He wasn't lying. You do got the devil in you...

She reaches for the button to start the crusher.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
Come on. Haven't you committed enough sins already? The Bible says "all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

MAXINE
I thought you were an atheist.

He smirks and spits blood at her feet.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones...
(beat)
This is for Leon.

She presses the button and the crusher starts to close.

JOHN LABAT
No! Please. Don't do this. It ain't fair. I just work for the man! It ain't my cause.

The crusher begins to impact the roof of the car.

JOHN LABAT (CONT'D)
He's not gonna stop. He won't ever stop until it's done. You'll need my help! You can't outrun the past, Maxine! This isn't over!

MAXINE
(beat)
Yes, it is.

The roof of the car begins to cave in.

JOHN LABAT
Stop! I can be bought! Whatever you want! Oh, God, no! Shut it off! Please! I don't wanna die in here! Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...

Terrified, John Labat screams as the pressure crumples the car's frame. His body explodes in a wave of blood and gore.

TEDDY
(to Maxine)
Get lost. We'll clean up the mess.

MAXINE
Thanks.

Teddy lights a CIGAR. There is a darkness behind his eyes.

TEDDY
What are agents for?

Shepard releases the dogs and they run over to gobble up the human slime that oozes out of the machine.

109 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD - NIGHT 109

Maxine snakes through the late-night circus of freaks and weirdos. She walks under a movie theater marquee advertising THE LEGEND OF BILLIE JEAN.

She passes the PSYCHIC.

PSYCHIC
How about you, pretty lady? Care to learn your future?

Maxine stops and looks back.

MAXINE
Do you remember me?

PSYCHIC
I meet a lot of people.

MAXINE
I thought you were psychic.

PSYCHIC
I see the future, toots, not the past.

Annoyed, Maxine walks off.

PSYCHIC (CONT'D)
(beat)
Still haven't found the green door yet, have you?

Maxine turns back to her.

PSYCHIC (CONT'D)
There is more work to be done.

MAXINE
I think I've had enough, thanks.

She turns to walk away.

PSYCHIC
It'll never be enough.

Maxine gives her the middle finger and walks off.

110 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 110

The neon PIZZA SIGN turns out just as Maxine returns home. She walks up to the adult video store and looks at the police tape closing it off. She can see the blood stains on the floor inside. *It is a somber sight.*

111 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT 111

Maxine stands in the shower. All of the blood, grime, and makeup wash off of her and swirls down the drain.

She gets out of the tub and wipes the steam from the mirror. She notices the envelope John Labat gave her still sitting on the side of the sink.

SHE CRUMPLES IT UP AND THROWS IT IN THE TRASH.

112 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 112

Maxine, in her towel, turns on the television and then looks through the fridge for something to eat. *Nothing much.*

Another NEWSCAST is on the tv.

NEWS ANCHOR
Tragically, another female victim of the Night Stalker has been discovered in Monterey Park. Public demand for this killer to be brought to justice has a record number of LAPD on duty around the city. Residents living in fear are praying that someone out there will come forward to finally put a stop to these vicious murders.

The news report triggers something in Maxine's mind. She looks down at the Puritan VHS BOX on the table with Molly's face on the cover.

113 INT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT 113

Maxine grabs the crumpled ENVELOPE from the trash can. She looks at the address on the front. **166 STARLIGHT DRIVE.**

Maxine remembers A FLASH OF AMBER AND TABBY TALKING ABOUT A PARTY IN THE HILLS - AND MOLLY TALKING ABOUT A PARTY.

If it's the same one...*Molly could be in danger.*

SHE PICTURES AMBER AND TABBY'S DEAD FACES IN HER MIND FOLLOWED BY MOLLY'S FAMOUS SCREAMING FACE--

114 EXT. MAXINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 114

Maxine hurries out to the car in her red satin jacket. Detective Torres and Detective Williams sit in their car and watch her drive off from across the street. Williams starts the engine and they follow after her.

115 INT. MAXINE'S CAR - NIGHT 115

Maxine drives. *Daggers in her eyes and the PISTOL on her passenger seat--*

116 EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT 116

She pulls the car to a stop at a dead end at the base of the Hollywood hills. She gets out of the car, spotting a dirt path leading to a GONDOLA.

The detectives pull to an inconspicuous stop a distance away and watch her walk up to the Gondola.

DETECTIVE TORRES
We should take her.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
(beat)
Let's give it a beat. See what she does first.

117 INT. GONDOLA - NIGHT 117

Maxine boards the gondola and throws the lever. The cable car treks up into the hills. *All of Los Angeles twinkles down below like a sea of shining stars.*

118 EXT. MANSION - NIGHT 118

Gun in hand, Maxine steps out of the Gondola. The multi-tiered hilltop mansion is extravagant and constructed mainly of GLASS.

Maxine can see inside, but it appears nobody is home. The furniture is all draped in WHITE SHEETS. She tries the front door but it's locked.

Maxine creeps around the grounds and spots the CLEFT-PALATE PROTESTOR dressed in a WHITE BAPTISMAL GOWN walking through the house.

She ducks behind a tree so that she isn't seen. The man disappears upstairs out of sight. She finds her way to a side door and tries it. *Bingo.*

119 INT. MANSION - NIGHT 119

Just inside the door are several boxes of VHS CAMCORDERS, VCRs, LIGHTS, and other moviemaking equipment. Maxine quietly sneaks through the house, cautiously peering into empty rooms as she passes them.

SHE MAKES HER WAY UP THE GRAND STAIRCASE TO THE SECOND FLOOR--

120 INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT 120

As she gets to the top of the stairs, she notices TWO PACKED SUITCASES on the landing.

And then she sees it--

THE ORNATE GREEN DOOR.

Maxine hesitates... *Could this really be it?*

Gun drawn, she creeps down the hall.

SUDDENLY a bedroom door opens behind her.

The cleft palate man drags a heavy suitcase out into the hall. He wears large GOLD RINGS. *He is heading for the stairs.*

Maxine hurries towards the green door and hides behind the wall of an adjacent hallway - *just out of view of the man.*

He stops at the top of the stairs, tired of dragging the suitcase. He wipes his brow with his sleeve and then drags the heavy suitcase down the stairs. *THUD THUD THUD!*

THEN--

CROWD APPLAUSE can be heard from *BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR.*

Maxine carefully opens the door...

121 INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT 121

She stands outside the room, gun drawn. Inside is a LARGE SCREEN TV.

ON THE TV SCREEN IS FOOTAGE OF *MAXINE'S FATHER*, THE TELEVANGELIST.

TELEVANGELIST
(on tv)
Get a shot of this...

The televangelist pulls a cover off of an easel, revealing a picture of YOUNG MAXINE (***final scene from "X"***).

TELEVANGELIST (CONT'D)
(on tv)
There she is. Our beautiful little daughter...MAXINE. Lured into a life of sin by the very deviants we warn of here on a daily basis.

Maxine trembles at the sight of her father on the television.

TELEVANGELIST (CONT'D)
(V.O. on TV)
From our loving home into the hands of devils. We pray one day she'll find her way home to us...

The footage cuts to shots of the picketers outside the movie studio holding signs reading STOP POISONING OUR YOUTH - PUNISH PORNOGRAPHERS - REPENT OR SUFFER followed by footage of Tabby crying before her death.

FIGURE IN BLACK
(O.S.)
I knew you'd come.

Maxine edges into the room and sees **THE FIGURE IN BLACK** sitting in front of a VANITY MIRROR touching up his makeup.

She is shocked to discover that the figure in black *is her* ***FATHER*** *-* ***ERNEST MILLER*** *- dressed in a BLACK CAPE, finessing thick layers of theatrical makeup on his aging face.*

MAXINE
(beat)
Daddy?

He stands up and removes the black makeup cape. Underneath he is wearing his traditional suit and tie.

ERNEST MILLER
It has taken me years to find you. I've missed you so much.

He reaches out with his GOLD-RINGED hand and lowers her gun. She allows it. Tears well in her eyes.

MAXINE
...But how?

ERNEST MILLER
People thought they were rid of me. They thought wrong. I'm not dead. Oh, no. I've been hiding out. Same as you. Planning my resurrection.

Maxine tries to process it all, but it's too much.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
I'm here to take you home. It will be my big comeback.

He points to the television. Footage of the picketers cuts to Maxine leaving her apartment, dancing in the peep booth, and walking down Hollywood blvd. *A montage of the many POV shots taken of her.*

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
I've been making a film...
(beat)
And you, my beautiful little Maxine...*are the STAR.*

Maxine starts to back up - *realizing he may be responsible for all the murders.*

MAXINE
No...

She keeps backing up into the hall. He follows.

ERNEST MILLER
Hollywood stole you from me. Just like so many other poor children. The Satanists have been propagating sex and violence throughout our homes. Weaponizing the television set. Brainwashing our youth. Turning them into deviants.
(beat)
But we will put a stop to them together. I, and many other parents like me, have come to expose these Devils for who they are once and for all.

Maxine has backed up almost to the stairs.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
There is a demon inside of you, my darling. But I can take it out.
(beat)
It will be the climax of the film.

Maxine backs into one of the SUITCASES still at the top of the stairs. She turns to see it tumble down end over end.

SLOW MOTION - THE SUITCASE HITS THE GROUND AND EXPLODES OPEN--

PIECES OF MOLLY'S DISMEMBERED BODY SPILL OUT ONTO THE FLOOR. MOLLY'S SEVERED HEAD FROZEN IN HER SIGNATURE SCREAM--

Maxine recoils in horror.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
Let's give 'em a show!

Suddenly, her father COVERS HER HEAD WITH A CLEAR PLASTIC BAG. She kicks and screams, but is eventually dragged to the ground. She gasps for air inside the bag but it is no use. She falls unconscious.

CUT TO BLACK:

The flicker of celluloid morphs into the familiar 8MM HOME MOVIE of a SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL dancing on a wooden stage.

CASTING DIRECTOR
(O.S.)
Do you mind taking your top off so we can see your breasts?

MAXINE
(O.S.)
Yeah, sure.

The sound of Maxine unzipping her top.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Thank you.

122 INT. SOUND STAGE - MORNING 122

FLASHBACK TO MAXINE'S AUDITION:

ON THE VHS AUDITION TAPE - Maxine zips back up her denim crop top. As she stands up to leave, the casting assistant puts a TAIL SLATE in front of the lens. Maxine stops. *The VHS camcorder catches one last bonus moment of her.*

MAXINE
You should cast me in this movie.

ELIZABETH BENDER
(O.S.)
Oh, really? Why is that?

Maxine stares back at her with unwavering confidence.

MAXINE
Because I'm special. There's nobody else out there like me.
(beat)
I'm a star. The whole world is gonna know my name.

She holds her confident gaze--

CUT TO:

123 EXT. MANSION - POOL - NIGHT 123

ONE BY ONE, FRESNEL MOVIE LIGHTS are struck. Operated from stands on the roof of the house, they illuminate the mansion's large SWIMMING POOl.

FIRES ignite in concrete planters surrounding the POOL.

On a concrete peninsula in the center of the water, Maxine is tied to a palm tree, *like a witch at the stake*. She is blindfolded and her mouth is gagged.

Standing all around the edges are PARISHIONERS IN WHITE BAPTISMAL ROBES. Their identities are disguised by white face makeup and thick BLACK CROSSES PAINTED OVER THEIR EYES AND MOUTH. They all wear matching GOLD RINGS.

Three of the parishioners are recording with BROADCAST VHS CAMERAS on large studio tripods. Another parishioner is holding a BOOM MIC. *It is almost like a proper television production.*

The door to the house opens and Maxine's father appears - *CAMERA READY in a BLACK PULPIT ROBE.* He walks out onto the concrete peninsula in the pool and approaches Maxine. His black-gloved hand gently removes her blindfold.

ERNEST MILLER
Don't be scared. I'm going to give you what you always wanted. You'll be more famous than anything Hollywood can conjure.
(beat)
(MORE)

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
I tried to help your friends. But they wouldn't accept God's love. They chose to stay in a world of sin. So they had to be punished by His wrath.

He opens his black-gloved hand and shows her Leon's UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS EARRING. She winces at the sight of it.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
But not you...
(beat)
You will be saved.

ON VHS - Maxine's father turns to the filming parishioners.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
Rolling?
(beat)
Tonight we document an exorcism. A form of miracle for the whole world to see!

He turns back to Maxine.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
Ezekiel 16:14. "Your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you," declares the Lord God. Evidence of your possession shall finally reveal Hollywood as the cult it is. Profiteering off of perversions and wickedness. Luring children into lives of sin. The Devil is real. And he deserves no place on the screens in our homes. I have come to save you! To save all lost children!
(beat)
The power of Christ, praise his name, is here with us. I have blessed the water of this pool. It is Holy. The Adversary is no match!

He moves closer to her and whispers in her ear.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
(whispered)
Play along with Daddy, now...It's your big scene.

He steps back.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
Admit possession. Confess! Denounce your life of sin and ask to be saved. Only then shall you receive His divine intervention.
(beat)
For if not...

ON VHS - A PARISHIONER dips a metal cattle brand into one of the fires. The end of the brand forms a PENTAGRAM.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
You shall be marked with the sign of the beast. So that the devil may never hide amongst us. The choice is yours...What do you say?

Maxine looks on, horrified, as the parishioner hands her father the glowing red branding iron. He brings it to her cheek.

DETECTIVE TORRES
(O.S.)
Hold it! Everyone get up against the side of the house. Move it!

ON VHS - The parishioners pan the camera, revealing Detective Williams and Detective Torres standing at the edge of the pool. Everyone freezes, waiting to see who is going to make the next move.

ERNEST MILLER
(to the parishioners)
Remember your sons and daughters...

Suddenly, one of the parishioners lifts a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN from under their baptism robe.

Detective Williams quickly fires her pistol, dropping the parishioner into the pool.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Mass has ended. Put your hands up.

Maxine's father fumes.

ERNEST MILLER
Where were they when your family members went missing? Did they help, then? No! They are complicit! They are devils! Only The LORD keeps watch over you, both now and forever.
(beat)
(MORE)

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
Fight for Him! Fight for your families! To the death!

ON VHS - BEDLAM REIGNS AS NUMEROUS OTHER PARISHIONERS PULL GUNS FROM THEIR ROBES. A WILD CROSSFIRE IS EXCHANGED ACROSS THE POOL.

The VHS CAMERAMAN is struck by a bullet and drops to the ground. The camera still records Maxine clinging tightly to the tree, unable to move and hoping she isn't hit by a stray bullet.

Her father gets nicked in the arm by a bullet. He falls and drops the branding iron at his side. HIS ROBE QUICKLY GOES UP IN FLAMES--

He screams and rolls into the pool to extinguish himself.

As bodies continue to drop left and right, Maxine slides BUSTER'S BUTTERFLY KNIFE out of her pocket. She starts to saw at the ropes. A burst of bullets pitter-patter across the back of the tree.

Detectives Williams and Torres take cover behind the flaming planters and return fire as best they can.

Maxine finally cuts the ropes and drops to the ground.

SUDDENLY, THE WOUNDED, CLEFT-PALATE MAN BURSTS FROM OUT OF THE POOL AND DRAGS MAXINE BACK IN WITH THEM.

They grapple underwater. Maxine grabs the butterfly knife off the bottom of the pool and rams the blade UP THE NOSE of her attacker.

She breaks free and comes up for air. She sees her father limping his way out onto the hillside. Unbeknownst to Maxine, a parishioner steps out from behind a light on the roof and aims at her.

BANG!

Detective Williams shoots the parishioner - the body falls off of the roof and splashes into the pool.

Maxine looks back, realizing Detective Williams just saved her life. Williams and Torres move along the pool deck, heading for the hillside.

DETECTIVE TORRES
I'm going after him.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Wait for me!

He runs off into the hills. Williams checks the surroundings. The coast is clear.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
(to Maxine)
Stay down. Keep out of sight. Backup will be here soon.

She runs off after Detective Torres as Maxine pulls herself out of the pool. She spots a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN on the pool deck, surrounded by bloodied bodies. She grabs it and hurries after the detectives.

124 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT 124

Maxine cautiously stalks her way up the path, carrying the sawed-off. Two GUNSHOTS ECHO from further up the trail. Maxine follows the sounds. As she rounds a bend in the trail she discovers a DEAD PARISHIONER.

Beyond the body she sees Williams leaning over Torres who is bleeding out from a deadly chest wound.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
(to Maxine)
Wait here with him. Put pressure on the wound.

Williams places Maxine's hand on Torres's badly bleeding chest and runs up the hillside. Maxine looks down at Torres.

DETECTIVE TORRES
You know, I always wanted to be an actor, too...

He is bleeding badly and slowly losing consciousness.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
I don't think I'm gonna make it...

Maxine looks to the trail where Williams ran off. An LAPD HELICOPTER begins circling above. The spotlight hits the trees.

DETECTIVE TORRES (CONT'D)
She'll catch him. She's the best.

That's not good enough for Maxine.

MAXINE
When you want something done right, sometimes you just have to do it yourself.

She lets go of his wound and runs up the trail after her father.

125 EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIGN - NIGHT 125

SEVERAL GUNSHOTS ring out through the canyon, followed by a WOMAN'S SCREAM. Maxine sees a figure outlined in the helicopter's spotlight scurrying up the hill behind the sign. She creeps around the large letters, gun drawn.

She is startled by the sudden appearance of Detective Williams, leaning against the back of the enormous "**D**". A metal CRUCIFIX is sticking out of her eye.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMS
Did I get him? Tell me I got him?

She stumbles past Maxine and falls down the hillside. Her body bounces off the rocks and crumples at the bottom of the ravine.

Maxine spots her father crawling out in front of the "**H**". He has been shot. She makes her way over to him.

They can hear police arriving at the top of the road above the sign. The LAPD helicopter swirls overhead. The police call out to her via the helicopter PA system.

LAPD
This is the Los Angeles Police department. We have you surrounded.

ERNEST MILLER
It was all for you...

He coughs up blood.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
I tried to give you what you wanted. To be just like your daddy...

Her father desperately looks up at her. She is backlit by the helicopter spotlight.

ERNEST MILLER (CONT'D)
But I created a monster. God forgive me. Failing a child is the greatest sin of all...

LAPD
Drop your weapon. Back away from the sign and put your hands on your head.

ERNEST MILLER
You are a vision in this light...A beautiful shining star.

Maxine looks up at the helicopter spotlight. She squints in the bright light.

THE IMAGE WARBLES AND DEGRADES AS IF THE RECEPTION ON AN ANTENNA TELEVISION WERE BEING INTERRUPTED--

SUDDENLY THE CHANNEL CHANGES:

126 INT. NEWS STATION - NIGHT 126

BREAKING NEWS - The NEWS ANCHOR (50s) sits at a desk giving a report. An image of RICHARD RAMIREZ'S MUGSHOT pops on screen.

NEWS ANCHOR
We interrupt this program to bring you breaking news. The horrifying saga finally comes to an end. Richard Ramirez, the man known as the Night Stalker, was apprehended by citizens last night, ending a year-long manhunt for the suspected serial killer. More on that later in the program.
(beat)
Also with us tonight is Maxine Minx. The star of the upcoming movie The Puritan II. Who joins us now with her attorney.

The camera widens out, revealing Maxine sitting at the desk. She is dressed as conservatively as ever. Poised and ready to make a good impression. Teddy sits next to her as her agent/attorney. An enthusiastic INTERVIEWER (40s) chats away.

INTERVIEWER
Maxine, you have become quite a celebrity outside of the movie business for taking down a serial murderer of your own. Who happened to be your father...Isn't that right?

ON THE BROADCAST MONITOR--

MAXINE
Why yes, Dianne, it was a harrowing experience. I am just so blessed to be sitting here with you today. I have to thank God for orchestrating this all.

THE CHANNEL CHANGES ON THE MONITOR - REVEALING - Various shots of Hollywood glitz and glamour outside of GRAUMAN's CHINESE THEATRE.

It is footage from the 1986 movie premiere of THE PURITAN II.

CUT TO:

127 EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATRE - NIGHT 127

SHELL SHOCK BY **NEW ORDER** plays as Maxine steps out of a limousine in a beautiful gown, looking every bit the star she always knew she would be.

She makes her way through a crowd on the red carpet, smiling for photos. She stops to speak to a REPORTER (40s).

REPORTER
Maxine, you look incredible tonight.

MAXINE
Thank you so much.

REPORTER
How does it feel knowing that after all you've been through, you're in one of the biggest movies in America?

MAXINE
It's hard to put it into words. All I can say is I visualized my dreams coming true and wow, here we are. It really worked.

REPORTER
There are reports that you sold your life rights and that the Maxine Minx story will be going into production soon with Elizabeth Bender directing. Is that true?

MAXINE
It is. Liz is an icon and a mentor. I can't wait to continue our journey together.

REPORTER
Is there anything you want to tell the people at home watching you tonight? Any words of encouragement for young girls trying to make it big in Hollywood?

Maxine thinks--

MAXINE
Never give up. It's hard work. You have to be willing to do whatever it takes. There's a phrase my father would always use...

She looks into the camera lens.

ON THE CAMERA MONITOR--

A spotlight swirls across Maxine's face--

THE CHANNEL CHANGES ONE FINAL TIME--

MATCH CUT TO:

128 EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIGN - NIGHT 128

THE LAPD SPOTLIGHT SWIRLS ACROSS MAXINE'S FACE. She is still standing at the Hollywood sign. *All of her success was a projection of her potential future...*

She looks back down at her dying father.

MAXINE
Say it with me now.

ERNEST MILLER & MAXINE
I will not accept a life I do not deserve.

He reaches out to her. Delirious from blood loss. She aims the shotgun at him.

MAXINE
I forgive you, Daddy. You didn't fail. You gave me just what I needed.
(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)
(beat)
Divine intervention.

He squints up at her with a bloody grin.

BANG!

She fires the shotgun and ***HIS HEAD EXPLODES--***

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

129 INT. STARWAGON TRAILER - DAY 129

Maxine sits in front of the mirror next to a large bouquet from Teddy. She spreads out a line of COCAINE. She brings a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL to her nose and inhales the powder.

She sits up and looks at herself in the mirror. *She is in her Veronica Rutland 1950s attire.* She stares deep into her reflection. Just as she is about to speak--

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR INTERRUPTS HER. Maxine turns.

MAXINE
Yeah?

The production assistant opens her trailer door.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
They're ready for you, Miss Minx.

Maxine nods and he steps out. She turns back to her reflection and looks deep into her soul.

MAXINE
You're a fucking movie star.

130 INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY 130

The enormous sound stage door opens and Maxine walks inside. *The very same stage where she first auditioned.* As she approaches the set, the entire crew applauds her return. Maxine stops to take it all in. Appreciating the admiration.

MAXINE
Thank you, it's good to be back.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Before we begin today, let's all just take a moment of silence for Molly Bennett. She was a dear member of our Puritan family and will be missed.

Everyone bows their head for a moment of silence. Maxine stares at the floor - *recognizing it could have just as easily been her they are praying for.*

After what feels like an appropriate length of time, Liz gives the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (30s) a covert look and nod.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Alright, thank you, everyone. Back to work.

The crew scatters. Liz walks over to Maxine.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Quite the turn of events. Tragic, really. But Molly was never going to make it. She was very good, but not a star. Anyone could see that. You on the other hand...I knew I was right about you.

Maxine smiles.

ELIZABETH BENDER (CONT'D)
We have one setup left in the dream sequence. Come and see your head.

They make their way over to the BEDROOM SET where the FX artist is holding a replica of Maxine's SEVERED HEAD. It is a strange sight for Maxine to see.

MAXINE
It looks so real.

They walk over to the video village director's monitor. The assistant director approaches.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
We're ready to give this a try.

ELIZABETH BENDER
Brilliant.

He runs off back to set. Maxine and Liz look at the monitor as the FX artist sets the severed head down in the middle of the bed.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Ok, let's lock it up!

A BELL rings on the stage and the studio door slides shut.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Roll camera!

Liz looks over at Maxine.

ELIZABETH BENDER
So now that the whole world knows your name, have you thought about what you want to do next? You certainly got everyone's attention.

Maxine looks at the monitor. A slate claps in front of her decapitated head. The head stares back at her - making direct eye contact with the camera lens.

MAXINE
I just never want it to end.

BETTE DAVIS EYES by **KIM CARNES** fades up--

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
And action!

Maxine and Liz watch as the crew films her decapitated head.

Drifting back out of the video monitor, out of the studio, out of the backlot, over the hills, revealing the HOLLYWOOD SIGN - Except it now spells ***MAXXXINE*****.**

Continuing to drift up into the sky, through the smog, and eventually into outer space where an infinite number of stars twinkle in the darkness.

FADE OUT:

*****POST CREDITS SCENE*****

131 EXT. TEXAS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MORNING 131

A pickup truck pulls to a stop in front of a small stone building.

132 INT. TEXAS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - MORNING 132

The BELL above the door JINGLES, and a pair of ALLIGATOR SKIN cowboy boots clunk through the galley and into an office.

133 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING 133

The alligator boots are kicked up on a desk next to a placard reading: **SHERIFF DENTLER.**

A KNOCK at the door gets his attention.

SHERIFF DENTLER
Come in.

OFFICER MITCHELL opens the door.

OFFICER MITCHELL
Howdy, Sheriff. How was your hunting trip? Bag anything good?

Sheriff Dentler removes his sunglasses.

SHERIFF DENTLER
Not a Goddamn thing.

Officer Mitchell nods.

OFFICER MITCHELL
Well, you didn't miss much. Nothing exciting ever happens around here anymore.

The Sheriff chuckles and opens the NEWSPAPER. He is reading the local sports page, but unbeknownst to him, on the front page, is Maxine's childhood picture and the headline **LOCAL GIRL BECOMES STAR.**

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END.